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**Dispatches from Japanglia:
Anglo-Japanese Literary Imbrication, 1880-1920**

by

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ABSTRACT

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This project considers the ways in which English authors and a diverse group of Japanese subjects co-produced literary representations of Japan in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. I argue that Anglo-Japanese encounters were defined by imbrication: by a number of overlapping phenomena that developed both coincidentally and as a result of contact between the two countries. Among coincidental developments, I include urbanisation and the development of a prosperous middle class in both Japan and England. Developments that appear to arise as a result of Anglo-Japanese contact include the prevalence of Social Darwinism in intellectual circles in both countries, as well as the growth of transnational bureaucratic networks. I refer to these phenomena collectively as “Japanglia.” The literary implications of these overlaps—some highly ephemeral, others longer lasting—form the focus of this dissertation. In the four case studies presented here, I find that Japanglian phenomena compel us to adopt variously intertextual, inter-artistic, tropological,

and somatically-focused approaches to our reading. My first chapter focuses on intertextuality in the work of Sir Christopher Dresser and Meiji bureaucrat Ishida Tametake. I find that the existence of Japanglian bureaucratic networks (formed in the overlap of English and Japanese bureaucracies) resulted in the publication of interpenetrative English and Japanese accounts of the same events. Japanglian texts may also be inter-artistic, using culturally blurred visual and decorative artforms as models for their own representations of Japan. This becomes apparent in my second case study, which considers the relationship between Gilbert and Sullivan's *Mikado* and Japanese ukiyo-e prints . Tropologically focused reading is also of use when reading these texts, for common tropes circulated between writers of English and Japanese origins. This common tropology features in the work of Rudyard Kipling and Okakura Kakuzō. Finally, as my study of the Japan writings of Marie Stopes suggests, blurring between the categories of Englishness and Japaneseness may register in the phenomenology of somatic experience.

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Introduction:

“Various Parts of the Globe”

[T]here is no longer anything absolutely foreign. Everything is within reach. Accordingly there is no longer anything exclusively “own” either.

—Wolfgang Welsch.¹

In decorating their homes, elite Japanese of the Meiji period (1868-1912) could choose from a range of products from Japan and abroad. Popular among these items were examples of Japanese-influenced Linthorpe ceramic ware, which were produced in the 1880s in England in a pottery founded by the subject of our first chapter, Sir Christopher Dresser. For Japanese buyers, it would seem that Linthorpe pottery brought a touch of English exoticism to the home. But this did not mean that English buyers perceived the ceramic ware as conversely familiar. Rather, Linthorpe pottery is said to have been re-exported back to England, where it was sold as distinctively Japanese merchandise.² For Japanese and English buyers alike, the pottery was attractively exotic. In aesthetic terms, putatively English and Japanese elements had so blurred into each other as to be indistinguishable. Here, the consumer’s default assumption—in both Japan and England—was one of foreignness.

But in other instances, both English and Japanese consumers regarded the same cultural output as a depiction of their own respective societies, assuming familiarity. In this regard, English viewers of the original 1885 production of Gilbert and Sullivan's *Mikado* looked past the players' costuming, which had been imported from Japan, to find "characters [that were] the same [as those in other Gilbert and Sullivan operas] although they w[ore] their robes with a difference."³ Where those viewers encountered familiarly English cultural forms, Japanese viewers perceived a disconcerting representation of their own society. Prominent Meiji journalist Fumio Yano thus found himself "'nothing but shocked, indignant, and offended.'"⁴ For buyers of Linthorpe pottery and viewers of *The Mikado*, both Japanese and English alike, the categories of Englishness and Japaneseness were now overlapping to such an extent that there was "no longer anything absolutely foreign," nor "anything exclusively 'own' either."

The literary implications of these overlaps—some highly ephemeral, others longer lasting—form the focus of this dissertation. Instead of viewing Anglo-Japanese relationships in this period through a lens of domination and resistance, I argue that, in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, such encounters were defined by imbrication: by a number of overlapping

phenomena that developed both coincidentally and as a result of contact between the two countries. I refer to these phenomena collectively as “Japanglia.” Such phenomena would not be merely aesthetic. They also included forms of political thought, social developments such as urbanisation and the development of a middle class, and scholarly developments such as the formulation of art historical epistemologies. The term “imbrication” appears to be particularly appropriate here as it leaves open questions of causality and volition. Overlaps may result from contact, such as those in government, the arts, and academia that included both English and Japanese subjects. But they also appear to have arisen coincidentally. Among other developments, we thus find both Japanese and English politicians solidifying national boundaries and developing imperial designs seemingly independently of each other.

The task of the project is to consider the implications of Japanglian phenomena for our reading of literary representations of Japan in this period. In the four case studies presented here, I find that Japanglian phenomena compel us to adopt variously intertextual, inter-artistic, tropological, and somatically-focused approaches to our reading. Put another way, in the literature of the period, Japanglia manifests intertextually, inter-artistically, tropologically, and somatically.⁵ With regard to intertextuality, I find that the existence of Japanglian bureaucratic networks (formed in the overlap of English and Japanese

bureaucracies) resulted in the publication of interpenetrative English and Japanese accounts of the same events, thus compelling the reader to pursue an intertextual reading strategy in order to come to an understanding of such events. Japanglian texts may also be inter-artistic, using those culturally blurred visual and decorative artforms as models for their own representations of Japan. Tropologically focused reading is also of use when reading such texts, for common tropes circulated between writers of English and Japanese origins. Finally, as the last case study suggests, that blurring between the categories of Englishness and Japaneseness may register in the phenomenology of somatic experience.

The project as a whole rests upon the bedrock concept of transculturality, the most prominent enunciations of which have been penned by Wolfgang Welsch. Like Welsch's scholarship, this project rejects the notion of cultures as autonomous spheres that are internally homogeneous and clearly different from other spheres, a model of "inner homogenization and outer separation."⁶ Such a notion fails to reckon with both the internal differentiation that defines contemporary societies and the extent of overlap between these societies.⁷ In place of this model, the project implicitly presents a world defined by transculturality, which might be defined at the most basic level as "the existence of cross-cultural commonalities."⁸ Based on this definition alone, the concept

appears somewhat banal; it is the explanation for the presence of such commonalities that makes the model of transculturality put forward by Welsch in particular, a useful point of departure. For Welsch, “cross-cultural commonalities” spring from a world composed of endless overlapping or entangled networks. In multi-ethnic societies in particular, networks include subjects who are also members of multiple other networks and cultural forms that derive from many other networks. “[C]ultures today,” Welsch explains, “are in general characterized by *hybridization*. For *every* culture, all *other* cultures have tendentially come to be inner-content or satellites.”⁹ It is this entanglement between cultures that produces a world in which nothing is absolutely foreign or absolutely “own,” in which what I term “restless syncretism” prevails. What prevents each network from becoming identical—a threat posed by the availability of cultural forms from all other networks—is that a given network will assign different levels of emphasis or priority to the various cultural forms that it incorporates.¹⁰

At the level of the individual, transculturality produces a subject with multiple, overlapping levels of identification, membership in a range of what Welsch terms “identity networks.”¹¹ A given subject might identify as a member of the network of journalists, as a Presbyterian, as a diaspora Korean, as an American, as part of a global political movement, and so on *ad infinitum*. What is

additionally striking about these identifications is that they do not presuppose the subject's presence in a particular physical location; they are, to use Afef Benessaïeh's terminology, characterised by "multi-situatedness."¹² With its core concept of Japanglia, this network seeks to delineate a complex of transcultural phenomena that in turn involve transcultural subjects ranging over a number of national borders. It is worth noting here that this study differs somewhat from Welsch's work in that it does not attribute all cultural commonality to "entanglements" (which, Welsch writes, are in turn a "consequence of migratory processes, as well as of communications systems and economic interdependencies").¹³ Rather, this project leaves open the possibility of coincidence as an explanation for such commonality. Finally, a transcultural conceptual framework poses linguistic challenges, rendering the use of terms such as "Japanese" and "English" problematic and potentially naïve. Insofar as is possible, I use such terms advisedly, to refer to subjects' legal categorisation (as "English" or "Japanese" citizens) and to languages, or, when appropriate, to refer to the perception of phenomena from an anachronistic and essentialising perspective. This is not to suggest, of course, that I have completely succeeded in avoiding the perpetuation of essentialism myself. For that lapse, I can only ask for the reader's latitude.

The project necessarily adopts a methodological approach that is alert to this multi-situatedness. The multi-sited ethnographic model put forward by George Marcus (among others) has much to offer in this regard. Such an approach, Marcus writes, “moves out from the single sites and local situations of conventional ethnographic research designs to examine the circulation of cultural meanings, objects, and identities in diffuse time-space.”¹⁴ My project shares this focus on circulation in its consideration of the movement of visual and decorative art objects, intellectual property, and people (particularly in academia and the arts bureaucracy). In practical terms, multi-sited ethnography of the kind outlined by Marcus employs “strategies of quite literally following connections, associations, and putative relationships ...”¹⁵ In specific terms, Marcus presents a number of tactics that are central to the pursuit of multi-site ethnography. The various case studies in this project each pursue at least one of these strategies. In the first place, the project seeks to “follow the people” and “follow the life or biography.”¹⁶ It thus focuses on the movements of subjects such as Sir Christopher Dresser, Ishida Tametake, Okakura Kakuzō, Rudyard Kipling, and Marie Stopes between Japan and England (as well as the United States, Germany, China, and other sites, where appropriate). In so doing, it “materializes a new object of study, a sense of a diasporic world independent of the mere movement of subjects between one place and another.”¹⁷ The networks formed as a result of overlaps between the ostensibly English and the Japanese, networks of

bureaucrats, scientists, artists, and intellectuals, gained particular strength in this period. Japan was neither sealed off by the Tokugawa period *sakoku* (closed country) policy nor ostracised for the expansionism that it would pursue with increasing aggression as the twentieth century wore on. The project additionally seeks to “follow the thing,” defining the circulation of art objects and technologies as one of this particular “diasporic world[’s]” key characteristics.¹⁸ On a more abstract level, the project also attempts to “follow the metaphor.”¹⁹ Such a strategy yields the comparative study of the common tropologies of ostensibly disparate figures such as Kipling and Okakura. “Follow[ing] the metaphor” in the form of figures of corporeality (in the case of Marie Stopes’s work) and of the visual/decorative arts (in the case of Gilbert and Sullivan) offers another way of mapping multi-sited Japanglian phenomena. All of this is not to suggest that the project functions as an ethnography; rather, it applies the insights of this form of ethnographic theory to literary analysis. Just as the mode of ethnographic study outlined by Marcus assumes that cultural forms and practices arise in the interactions between subjects living in and moving between many locations that may transcend national boundaries, so too does this study examine literary texts as cultural products arising from multiple sites. And like this form of ethnography, my project is “designed around chains, paths, thread, conjunctions, or juxtapositions of locations.”²⁰ Again, what it adds to this model is a consideration of the role of coincidence.

An approach that emulates that of multi-sited ethnography is also historically appropriate. Marcus writes that “although multi-sited ethnography may not necessarily forsake the perspective of the subaltern, it is bound to shift the focus of attention to other domains of cultural production and ultimately challenge this frequently privileged positioning of ethnographic perspective.”²¹ A brief account of Japan’s geopolitical trajectory and its continued interstitiality in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries confirms the need for such a challenge. The late nineteenth century found the country negotiating a course from feudalism to industrialized modernity.²² And it was both colony and colonizing power. These dualities are not unrelated. To explain Japan’s unusual position in this period, we need to consider the country’s recent history. In 1868, opposition forces seeking to restore imperial rule brought about the collapse of the beleaguered Tokugawa shogunate. This event, known as the Meiji Restoration, ushered in the reign of the young Meiji emperor, and the beginning of a period of highly self-conscious modernisation on the part of the new government. Behind this drive for modernisation, we find one major goal: freeing Japan from the disadvantageous commercial treaties that had been thrust upon it by various Western powers after they had gained entry into the country in 1853-54. The most forceful of these powers was the English.²³ Under the provisions of these treaties, a number of foreign powers were allowed to

establish diplomatic missions in a few of the Japanese port areas. Foreign nationals were also allowed to reside and establish businesses in these areas. For many Japanese, this constituted a humiliating imposition on the nation's sovereignty, a sign of the nation's subordination to the Western powers.²⁴

But at the same time as it was subject to foreign commercial expansion, Japan was pursuing its own expansionist agenda. It had annexed the Ryûkyûs (now Okinawa) in 1879. In 1895, it gained control over Taiwan as a result of its victory in the Sino-Japanese War. It seems that, for the Meiji government, a modern state was also an imperial power. The push to cultivate an image of modernity in order to regain genuine sovereignty had thus created a situation in which Japan was both (de facto) colony and colonising power. With this background of antagonism between Japan and both Western powers on the one hand and Asian states on the other, it is fair to say that Japan positioned itself with regard to multiple others, rather than a single hegemon. Japan's dual status as colony and colonising power is reflected in the difficulties encountered by nineteenth-century racial theorists in their attempts to "fix" the Japanese in racial terms. The Japanese were commonly described, in Rotem Kowner's words, as "lighter than yellow, but not enough."²⁵ Diplomatic developments in the 1890s and early twentieth century certainly did not place Japan in a more certain position vis-à-vis the global racial hierarchies formulated by such theorists. Japan

ultimately freed itself of the unequal treaties, its government negotiating their cessation in 1894 (taking effect in 1899). Additional control over tariffs was secured in 1911. Perhaps most importantly with regard to this project, 1902 saw the conclusion of a treaty of alliance between Japan and Britain. As Gary Allinson writes, "Japan had thus begun to associate with the major diplomatic powers of Europe on a basis of apparent equality."²⁶ The use of the modifier "apparent" is, of course, important here. The experience of geopolitical subordination could only have remained a fresh wound, with humiliations such as the Triple Intervention, which followed Japan's victory in the 1894-95 Sino-Japanese War, being anything but distant memories.

Finally, it should not be thought that these geopolitical events were always mere elite concerns. Diplomatic incidents such as the sinking of the British vessel, *The Normanton*, underscored widespread concerns in Japan about the country's international standing. In October 1886, the English freighter sank off the coast of Kyushu. The freighter's English captain left Japanese passengers to drown as he helped his compatriots to the safety of lifeboats. One of the most despised provisions of the Anglo-Japanese commercial treaty—extra-territorial rights for British expatriates in Japan—ensured that the captain was tried by a British court and, at least initially, exonerated. The treaty ports were thus witness to anti-British riots in the wake of the judgment. In response to Japanese outrage,

the case was re-examined, with the captain being sentenced to three months of confinement. Families of the dead were, however, left uncompensated.²⁷

Attention to diplomatic matters was even more pervasive in the period between 1890 and 1910. What Sandra Wilson terms a “discourse of national greatness” featured ever more prominently in “the press, in self-presentation at industrial expositions, and in substantial written works by Japanese intellectuals” with each Japanese military and diplomatic success.²⁸ The dynamism and interstitiality of Japan’s geopolitical position in this period thus registered with many Japanese, and not merely with the relatively small diplomatic community.

Insofar as they focus on Japan and England as discrete, stable entities, existing studies that connect Meiji/Taisho Japan with Anglophone literature in this period fail to recognise this dynamism and interstitiality. Only two studies consider this relationship at length. The first, Earl Miner’s *The Japanese Tradition in British and American Literature* (1958), is remarkable for its chronological and generic scope.²⁹ That said, it offers very little close textual analysis. The second, Yokoyama Toshio’s *Japan in the Victorian Mind: A Study of Stereotyped Images of a Nation, 1850-80*, appeared in 1983.³⁰ As its title would suggest, the study focuses on initial Western encounters with Japan (leaving aside those encounters that occurred prior to the closing of the country to most foreigners). While this period is certainly of great interest, it largely predates the development of the Japanglian

networks that I wish to examine and that are so prominent in the late nineteenth century. Moreover, as an historian, Yokoyama does not pursue close textual analysis. His study also focuses on the periodical press rather than on longer literary works. More generally, both studies lack the theoretical apparatus that has been developed in and around subsequent studies of transculturality. Finally, while studies of Victorian interest in Japanese arts and crafts are not necessarily lacking in theoretical weight, such studies do not, in any significant sense, examine the impact of such interest on the literature of the period.³¹ This project thus aims to fill what is unarguably a gap in literary scholarship by using both Japanese- and English-language sources to consider literature dealing with Japan in this period in terms of dynamic, multiply situated transcultural networks.

Having considered the historical and scholarly backgrounds for the project, I will now outline the various chapters in greater detail. The first chapter is entitled “Unwitting Coauthorship: Sir Christopher Dresser and the Meiji Japanese Bureaucracy.” Dresser, one of the foremost figures in Victorian design, travelled to Japan in 1876. There, his words and actions were covertly recorded by his Japanese translator and guide before published as a Meiji government report in 1877. In his own highly popular account of his travels, *Japan, Its Architecture, Art and Art Manufactures*, Dresser devotes substantial space to an

outraged denunciation of the report, which I have located and translated (it had been widely presumed lost). I consider the ways in which Dresser's narrative and the Japanese report complicate each other and constitute what might be termed "coauthored" texts. Drawing on a range of historical and theoretical sources, I further consider the ways in which the existence of the Japanese report simultaneously undermines and reinforces Dresser's claims to expert status. In focusing on the relationship between these two texts, I argue that intertextual reading is central to an understanding of Japanglian phenomena.

The second chapter, "Edo at the Savoy: The Floating World of *The Mikado*," replaces this intertextual approach with an inter-artistic one.

Considering the connections between Gilbert and Sullivan's comic opera and ostensibly Japanese decorative and visual art forms, particularly the *ukiyo-e* genre of painting, I argue that the circumstances in which the decorative and visual arts that feature in *The Mikado* were developed and consumed suggest a paradigm via which to pursue a close reading of the opera. Specifically, the opera's vision of Japan is shaped by the screens, jars, vases, and fans to which its libretto makes reference. These objects were both produced and received with what I term a peculiarly Japanglian vision. On the production side, both Japanese and English artisans and manufacturers produced art objects that, through a centuries-long process of mutual influence, could no longer be termed either English or

Japanese in any simple sense. On the consumption side, this exchange of artistic influence meant that buyers of such objects were no better at recognising instantiations of an English aesthetic than they were at recognising a Japanese equivalent. Profoundly influenced by a notion of Japan defined in terms of objects, Gilbert and Sullivan also saw through a blurred Japanglian lens. This chapter expands the definition of that core concept of Japanglia to include transcultural similarities that arise seemingly coincidentally in addition to those arising as a result of transcultural entanglement. Among this former class of similarities, I adduce increased urbanisation and the development of a prosperous middle class in both Edo Japan and Victorian England.

Entitled “High Priests of the Exhibitionary Order: Rudyard Kipling, Okakura Kakuzō, and the Japanese Exhibition-State,” the third chapter builds on this dual definition of Japanglian phenomena in its consideration of the common troping of Japan as an exhibition space in the writing of both Okakura and Kipling. In its analysis of the two authors’ work, the chapter proceeds by adducing the respective characteristics of the two exhibitionary forms presented by the authors—in Kipling’s case, the curio cabinet, and in Okakura’s, the modern museum—and considering the ways in which those characteristics manifest in the texts’ presentation of Japan and the Japanese. In his letters from Japan, Kipling situates himself as a collector in relation to the Japanese people,

whom he depicts as curios to be housed in the cabinet that is Japan. Whereas Kipling selects the pre-modern cabinet in his presentation of a Japanese exhibition-state, Okakura tropes Japan as a museum, a symbol of both modernity and national unity. These important differences notwithstanding, one is led to ask why two such seemingly different authors—the one a key supporter of British imperialism, the other a fervent detractor of the same—both draw on exhibitionary figures in defining Japanese national space. In offering answers to this question, I once again adduce a series of overlapping, Japanglian phenomena that arise out of both contact and coincidence—phenomena such as the prevalence of Social Darwinist thinking in both Japanese and English intellectual circles, the appearance of what Timothy Mitchell terms an “exhibitionary order,” and the development of art historical epistemologies. This chapter also marks an historical division in the project, between the Japan of the unequal treaties (presented in Kipling’s writings) and that of the post-treaty discourse of national greatness (presented in Okakura’s writings).

The final chapter, “‘Returned to My Original State’: The Somatics of Anglo-Japanese Engagement in Marie Stopes’s Japan Writings,” presents something of a departure from those that precede it. Whereas the first three chapters pay some attention to the tensions inherent in transcultural entanglements, the fourth chapter takes such tensions as its focus. The chapter

considers the Japanese experiences of the early-twentieth-century English birth control campaigner Marie Stopes, particularly as depicted in the writings that arose from her time in Japan: her *Journal from Japan*, *Plays of Old Japan: The Noh*, and finally, *Love Letters from Japan*, which archives and re-presents the correspondence exchanged between Stopes and her Japanese lover, Fujii Kenjiro under the cover of a proliferation of pseudonyms. Taken together, *Love Letters* and *Plays of Old Japan* present us with a case study of the limits and persistence of Japanglian engagement. In both texts, such engagement is both undermined and perpetuated by the corporeal. Undermined insofar as the body is consistently presented as the site of upon which Japanglian relationships come undone; perpetuated insofar as Japanglian engagement is permanently inscribed on the bodies of those involved in it. Just as the traffic in both ideas and art objects produced a blurring of English and Japanese cultural elements, so too did Stopes and Fujii experience a corporeal form of the blurring of categories.

The somatic ramifications of transcultural subjectivity were only too familiar to Okakura, another of the project's key figures. With Bright's Disease attacking his kidneys in the final months of his life, Okakura described his condition as a "'complaint of the twentieth century.'" "'I have eaten things in various parts of the globe,—too varied for the hereditary notions of my stomach and kidneys,'" he lamented.³² I can only hope that the forthcoming encounter

with these “‘various parts of the globe’” will prove a more salutary experience for my readers.

¹Wolfgang Welsch, “Transculturality: The Puzzling Form of Cultures Today,” in *Spaces of Culture: City, Nation, World*, ed. Mike Featherstone and Scott Lash (London: Sage, 1999), pp. 194-213, 198.

²Widar Halen, “Dresser and Japan” in *Shock of the Old: Christopher Dresser’s Design Revolution*, ed. Michael Whiteway (New York: Smithsonian, Cooper-Hewitt National Design Museum, 2004), pp. 127-139, 137.

³“A Japanese Opera,” *The Times*, 16 March 1885, issue 31395.

⁴Fumio Yano, “Rondon Tsūshin [London Correspondence],” *Yūbin Hōchi Shinbun* [Post-Report Newspaper], 4 March 1885, qtd. in *1885-nen Rondon Nihonjin Mura* / 『1885年ロンドン日本人村』 [The London Japanese Village of 1885] (Tokyo: Asahi Shinbunsha, 1983), p. 75.

⁵I use the term “tropological” here as a synonym for “figurative,” and not in its alternative sense relating to the moral interpretation of texts, especially Scripture.

⁶Welsch, “Transculturality,” p. 195.

⁷Ibid.

⁸Welsch, “On the Acquisition and Possession of Commonalities,” in *Transcultural English Studies: Theories, Fictions, Realities*, ed. Frank Schulze-Engler and Sissy Helff (Amsterdam and New York: Rodopi, 2009), pp. 3-36, 5.

⁹Welsch, “Transculturality,” p. 198.

¹⁰Welsh, “Commonalities,” p. 9.

¹¹Ibid.

¹²Afef Benessaieh, “Multiculturalism, Interculturality, Transculturality,” in *Amériques Transculturelles/Transcultural Americas*, ed. Benessaieh (Ottawa: Univ. of Ottawa Press, 2010), pp. 11-38, 27.

¹³Welsch, “Commonalities,” p. 7.

¹⁴George E. Marcus, “Ethnography in/of the World System: The Emergence of Multi-Sited Ethnography,” *Annual Review of Anthropology* 24 (1995): 95-117, 96.

¹⁵Marcus, p. 97.

¹⁶Marcus, pp. 106 and 109.

¹⁷Marcus, p. 106.

¹⁸Ibid.

¹⁹Marcus, p. 108.

²⁰Marcus, p. 105.

²¹Marcus, p. 101.

²²Kenneth B. Pyle, *The Making of Modern Japan* (New York: D. C. Heath, 1996), p. 115.

²³ Pyle, p. 78; Ian Nish and David Steed, *China, Japan and Nineteenth-Century Britain* (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 1977), p. 50.

²⁴ Nish and Steed, pp. 50-1.

²⁵ Rotem Kowner, "'Lighter Than Yellow, But Not Enough': Western Discourse on the Japanese 'Race,' 1854-1904," *The Historical Journal*, 43 (1) (Winter 2000):1-47, 103.

²⁶ Gary Allinson, *The Columbia Guide to Modern Japanese History* (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1999), p. 67.

²⁷ See http://www.east-asian-history.net/textbooks/MJ/ch6_main.htm (last accessed 6 June, 2011).

²⁸ Sandra Wilson, "The Discourse of National Greatness in Japan, 1890-1910," *Japanese Studies* 25, 1 (2005), pp. 35-51, 35.

²⁹ Earl Miner, *The Japanese Tradition in British and American Literature* (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1958).

³⁰ Toshio Yokoyama, *Japan in the Victorian Mind* (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire UK: Macmillan, 1983).

³¹ See, for example: Klaus Berger, *Japonisme in Western Painting from Whistler to Matisse* (Transl. David Britt) (Cambridge UK: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1992); Sato Tomoko and Watanabe Toshio (eds.), *Japan and Britain: An Aesthetic Dialogue, 1850-1930* (London: Lund Humphries, 1991); Genevieve Lacambre, "Jū-kyū-seiki ni okeru Japonisumu / 十九世紀におけるジャポニスム [Japonisme in the Nineteenth Century]," in Galeries Nationales du Grand Palais, Réunion des Musées Nationaux (France) and Kokuritsu Seiyō Bijutsukan Gakugeika (ed.), *Japonisumu -ten : 19-seiki Seiyō bijutsu e no Nihon no eikyō / 『ジャポニスム一展：十九世紀西洋美術への日本の影響』 [Japonisme Exhibition: The Influence of Japan on Nineteenth-Century Western Art]* (Tokyo: Kokuritsu Seiyō Bijutsukan, 1988), pp. 17-24.

³² Rustom Bharucha, *Another Asia: Rabindranath Tagore and Okakura Tenshin* (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 2009), p. 6.

Chapter One

Unwitting Co-authorship:

Christopher Dresser, Ishida Tametake, and Meiji Japan

Although he would later describe his visit as being motivated predominantly by a personal interest in Japanese aesthetics, Victorian design reformer Sir Christopher Dresser was serving several masters as he toured the potteries, foundries, and inns of Meiji Japan in 1876.¹ Perhaps first and foremost, he traveled as a representative of his employer, the South Kensington Museum. He was further commissioned by both the British and Japanese governments. For the former, he would report back on improving Japanese techniques in the production of arts and crafts with the aim of improving British techniques in the same area. For the latter, he would advise on ways in which Japanese arts and crafts might be made more attractive to European markets.² While Britain had, by this point, risen to a position of industrial supremacy, its leaders shared with the Japanese a concern about the state of their country's manufactures.³

Japanese admiration for Britain's industrial prowess lay behind another of Dresser's duties in Japan: following the suggestion of Sir Philip Owen, his superior at South Kensington, the designer would bring "a collection of objects [primarily recent British art manufactures] as could only prove valuable" to

Tokyo's newly established National Museum.⁴ In addition to these tasks, Dresser acted in a more explicitly commercial capacity for both Tiffany of New York and Londos of London, both of which had commissioned him to purchase large quantities of Japanese art and craft to be sold in their respective showrooms. Finally, in addition to acting as a consultant for Londos, the designer was engaged in his own commercial ventures. The trip allowed him to purchase goods for his Alexandra Palace Company, the import business that he had established in 1873.⁵ Upon returning to England, he was able to further profit from his travels by presenting lectures on the art industries of Japan and penning an account of his travels, *Japan: Its Architecture, Art and Art Manufactures*, published in 1882 (hereafter *JAAAM*). This travelogue forms a part of the focus of this chapter.

The other point of focus for this chapter offers a counter-narrative to *JAAAM* (although one could certainly say the opposite, too). While convalescing after a long illness in the years following his journey, and with the assistance of his daughters, Dresser was able to shape his travel journals into the manuscript of *JAAAM*. It was in those years, more precisely in April of 1878, that he received a package addressed to him from Japan.⁶ It contained the English translation of a Japanese government report on his movements and pronouncements over the course of his travels. In that time, Dresser had been accompanied chiefly by two men—Ishida Tametake, who would undertake “the

finance and official duties,” and Sakata Haruo, who would “act . . . as my guide and interpreter” (p. 63). Although he was aware of their status as Japanese government employees, the designer had evidently assumed that their roles would not extend beyond the strictly logistical. He was thus shocked to discover that the pair had been transcribing his remarks as they traveled with him and that Ishida had edited these transcriptions into a document that would be published and distributed among Japanese merchants. Entitled *Ishida Tametake hitsuroku eikoku Dokutoru Doresseru dōkō hōkokusho* [*Written Report of Travels with the Englishman, Doctor Dresser, by Ishida Tametake*] and published in Japan in October, 1877, the report (hereafter referred to as the Japanese report, *Eikoku Dokutoru*, or simply *ED*) constitutes the second point of focus in this chapter.

More specifically, I will consider here the relationship between Dresser’s narrative of his encounter with Japan (*JAAAM*) and the Japanese narrative of that encounter (*ED*). While *ED* praised Dresser for his “extensive knowledge and fine taste in matters relating to the fine arts” (p. 215), it also contained what Dresser termed “laughable” misunderstandings” and “many facts altogether new to me” (p. 216). The latter prompted the designer to devote the middle chapter of his narrative to a denunciation of the Japanese report. This denunciation quoted selectively from the document in order to discredit its authors. The compilation of *ED* and Dresser’s response to it have much to tell us about the nature of

Anglo-Japanese interactions in this period and the extent to which such interactions resulted in what I will term “co-authored” representations of Japan. These representations are a product not of hegemonically imposed English visions, nor of such visions and subsequent Japanese responses. Far more interestingly, they emerge from situations of sometimes antagonistic, sometimes unwitting, and sometimes enthusiastic collaboration that complicate any notion of a binary of English representation of Japanese response. Such is the degree of interpenetration between *JAAAM* and *ED* that any consideration of Dresser’s experiences in Japan is incomplete insofar as it fails to consider both texts in relation to each other.

To clarify, then, I will be considering two primary texts in this chapter. The first, *JAAAM*, is Dresser’s narrative of his travels in Japan. The second, *Eikoku Dokutoru*, had been widely considered by Dresser scholars to be lost. Stewart Durant, one of the foremost writers on Dresser, notes that “this report, which would have been of great interest to historians, was never published.”⁷ He adds that “the manuscript probably does not survive, although parts of the report were probably incorporated into *Japan: Its Architecture, Art and Art Manufactures*.”⁸ In one sense, Durant may be right: the English translation of *ED* from which Dresser quotes in his narrative, like the vast majority of the designer’s papers, no longer appears to be extant.⁹ But this is not true of the

original Japanese document upon which the English translation is based. The vast majority of the relevant English scholarship appears to quote the title of the Japanese report inaccurately, referring to it as either the “Dresser Report” or, transliterating from the Japanese, “Doressaa hōkoku.” This latter transliteration of Dresser’s name, while now the standard form, is at variance with that used in the actual report title, “doresseru” (see full title above). After many unsuccessful searches of Tokyo’s National Diet Library using the term “Doressaa”—under which all other information pertaining to Dresser is filed—I at last came upon an article that transliterated the report’s title accurately.¹⁰ Using that title, I was able to locate the Japanese document in the National Diet Library’s collection of Meiji period documents. As the Diet Library has not cross-referenced the entry for *ED* with all other materials relating to Dresser—which are filed under the subject heading “Doressaa”—one is unable to locate the report without a completely accurate title. With the assistance of a Japanese native speaker, I was able to translate key sections of the report from the original Classical Japanese into English. To sum up, I will thus be writing not only about *JAAAM* and the sections of the English translation of the Japanese report (i.e. *ED*) excerpted in it; as this nineteenth-century English translation of *ED* appears to be no longer extant, I will also be quoting from my new translation in order to shed further light on the relationship between Dresser’s narrative and the Japanese report.

The chapter begins with a consideration of the significance of Dresser's career, *JAAAM*, and *ED*. It then offers an analysis of the chapter in *JAAAM* in which Dresser quotes from his English translation of *ED* in order that he might discredit it. I consider the ways in which, despite the designer's best efforts, even those quotations that he selects from the Japanese report threaten to undermine *his* narrative, rather than vice versa. In the second section of the chapter, I move on to consider the ways in which passages from the Japanese report that Dresser does *not* quote in *JAAAM* present a more complex picture of Ishida and Sakata; the guide and translator whom Dresser paints as confused neophytes in his selective use of the report appear to be rather more critical of their English travel companion than the chapter in *JAAAM* suggests. Moving beyond these specificities in the third section of the chapter, I argue that, almost regardless of its contents, the very existence of the Japanese report troubles Dresser's claims to narratorial and professional authority. Having considered many of the points of difference between *ED* and *JAAAM*, I examine the ways in which, in addition to producing a coauthored representation of Japanese culture when considered in tandem, the two texts are coauthored in the more conventional sense of the term. Finally, in the sixth section of the chapter, I argue that this dynamic of coauthored or co-produced cultural representations is symptomatic of a much larger cross-cultural dynamic—that of Japanglia, a dizzying, disorderly cultural exchange in which England and Japan blur into each other.

I

Before moving on to textual analysis, it is worth considering the significance of my subject matter. Why study the work of Christopher Dresser? Born in 1834, Dresser became part of a generation educated in one of the newly established Government Schools of Design with the aim of improving the woeful state of British art manufactures.¹¹ He was one of the first of the Victorians to bring knowledge of and interest in design to a larger public, in particular the growing middle class.¹² His capacity to appeal to the masses rested in great part on his willingness to embrace new industrial technologies, a trait that set him apart from many other designers.¹³ In his studio, one of the country's largest, Dresser and his assistants created designs for an unparalleled range of household objects. His skill in branding himself and managing a large operation led a contemporaneous periodical, the *Studio*, to term him "perhaps the greatest of commercial designers" and "a household word to people who are interested in design."¹⁴ And his influence was felt not only in Great Britain, but also in France, the United States, and, of course, Japan.¹⁵

While Dresser drew on a vast range of cultural influences in his design work, his interest in Japanese aesthetics would have perhaps the most definitive

influence on his drawings and ideas.¹⁶ Long before he visited Japan, he was lecturing on Japanese decorative arts, collecting Japanese art objects, and incorporating Japanese motifs into his work—and doing so before almost any other European designer.¹⁷ He also served as a judge, organiser, and exhibitor at some of the international exhibitions that were instrumental in the popularization of Japanese aesthetics in Europe and the United States.¹⁸ His engagement with Japanese art went deeper than a mere appreciation for *japonaiseries*, with Widar Halen crediting him as one of the first Westerners to “be able to discern . . . [the] aesthetic criteria” of Japanese art. In his writings, comparisons between Japanese art and that of Classical Greece “contributed to remove the false hegemonic barriers between Western and Oriental art in general.”¹⁹ For these reasons, a number of scholars have defined the designer as one of the foremost proponents of Victorian *Japonisme*, the Euro-American movement to incorporate Japanese aesthetics into Western art.²⁰

Given the enormous influence of the *Japonisme* movement, it is somewhat surprising to note that Dresser was one of the few European designers to visit Japan in the nineteenth century and indeed the first to do so.²¹ His account of his travels, *JAAAM*, contributed significantly to that movement. The thoroughness of the narrative’s descriptions of Japanese art and aesthetics may be attributed in part to the designer’s unprecedented access to ancient Japanese religious sites

and centers of artistic production.²² Dresser's experiences in Japan would also shape his subsequent work. Charlotte Gere and Michael Whiteway argue that "the trip to Japan brought out the full maturity and individuality of Dresser's designs."²³ By the designer's own assessment, the encounter with Japan was even more influential vis-à-vis his creative output than his seven years at the Government School of Design.²⁴ Indeed, it would precede the most productive years of his career.²⁵

Yet, despite Dresser's centrality to Victorian design in general and *Japonisme* more specifically, his reputation has been largely eclipsed by that of his exact contemporary, the medievalist William Morris and Morris's chief inspiration, John Ruskin (hence this biographical preamble).²⁶ Dresser's temporary omission from the canon of Victorian aesthetics is all the more strange when one considers that he was as prominent as Morris in the course of his lifetime and was responsible for a design output vastly outstripping that of his medievalist contemporary.²⁷ Until 1937, when Nikolaus Pevsner wrote a seminal, laudatory article about the designer's work, Dresser was rarely spoken of in the context of Victorian aesthetics. And Dresser's more obviously industrial designs started to become influential only in the 1980s, while the first major studies of his work were only published in the 1990s.²⁸ The critical neglect of Dresser may be attributed to a number of factors—the difficulty of romanticising a utilitarian

technician (in contrast with artists such as Morris); a late-Victorian shift away from an aesthetic of modernity toward one of nostalgia; the nature of Dresser's studio structure.²⁹ These are only the most significant of a range of factors contributing to Dresser's disappearance—albeit temporary—from the aesthetic radar.

This explanation implicitly contrasts the work of Dresser the technician with that of Morris the aesthete. While this distinction is, in many senses, valid, it is also a potential obstacle to developing a fuller understanding of Dresser's contribution to Victorian aesthetic thought. Indeed, for Dresser scholars, the most interesting aspect of *JAAAM* may be the way in which it troubles our conception of Dresser as an uncritical supporter of industrial modernity. In his nostalgic paeans to the Japanese hand craftsman and his lamentations over the uniformity produced by modern British manufacturing processes, the designer starts to sound much more like the nostalgic Morris than the champion of industrialization he was commonly assumed to be.³⁰ In focusing on Dresser's conflicted position vis-à-vis industrialisation and the intersection of art and commerce, this chapter is of a piece with more recent scholarship that seeks to nuance the image of Dresser as an industrial design pioneer.³¹

Dresser's overshadowing goes a long way toward explaining the lack of scholarship on *JAAAM*, a text that Halen notes is "generally described as the first Western attempt to treat the art-manufactures and architecture of Japan as a serious academic subject."³² Few Dresser scholars offer more than a brief description on the text and even fewer have written on the text at length. Of the latter, Elizabeth Kramer, a design historian, focuses more on Dresser's design work after his visit to Japan than on *JAAAM* and mentions *ED* only in passing. Sato Hidehiko offers a more sustained analysis of both *JAAAM* and *ED* but, oddly, completely elides the conflict between the two texts.³³ For example, Sato paraphrases sections of *ED*, noting that Dresser "suggested that Japan export its special produce such as ginger, mandarin oranges and agar."³⁴ But the section of the report that purports to describe Dresser's ideas about ginger is precisely one of those that the designer excerpts and quibbles with in *JAAAM*. There is thus a paucity of scholarship on one of the major works of this central figure in Victorian art and aesthetics.

Even if one accepts the need for more sustained analysis of *JAAAM*, one might query whether the text needs to be examined from a literary perspective and, moreover, in comparison with the Japanese report. In regard to the first point, historian Bernard Denvir describes a high degree of interpenetration between visual artistic and literary work in the mid-late Victorian period:

Books on art and design by writers such as Julia Cartwright, Walter Crane, Christopher Dresser, Richard Redgrave, C. R. Ashbee and other poured from the presses. Extensive biographies of artists . . . commanded a large market. Nor were artists themselves reticent about recording their personal impressions . . . Nor were art critics and artists the sole arbiters of aesthetic taste. Indeed many of the most influential figures, among them Thackeray, Matthew Arnold, Walter Pater, Oscar Wilde and George Moore, were known mainly as writers in other literary forms, even though they had a deep interest in matters of visual interest.³⁵

Figures such as Dresser and Morris, it would seem, considered themselves to be writing literature, rather than mere musings on their primary artistic work. The contemporary reputations of such figures suggest that their reading public may have agreed with them. On a more theoretical note, Kate Sturge writes of a trend in recent decades toward the use of literary critical concepts in the analysis of ethnographic texts, a rubric under which we might file *JAAAM*.³⁶ Increasingly, anthropologists—Hayden White being only the most famous example—have seen such texts as relying on the same tropological bases as narratives that are

more commonly accepted as literary.³⁷ There are, then, historical and theoretical grounds for considering *JAAAM* from a literary perspective.

There are also compelling reasons to undertake a more sustained analysis of the Japanese report. While it certainly challenges the professional and narratorial authority that Dresser seeks to assert in *JAAAM*, *ED* is also significant in its own right. The report had a considerable impact on both the activities of Japanese merchants and the policies of the Meiji government. Together with a translation of one of Dresser's English speeches on Japanese art industries, the report was relayed to many Japanese manufacturers and merchants. Sato writes that Dresser's words "had a direct impact on the various manufacturing regions of Japan," although "everyone realized that these improvements could not be made overnight."³⁸ In government, a number of high-level public servants who had direct interactions with Dresser formed a group to encourage the practice of traditional Japanese arts.³⁹ The report thus registered on both government and mercantile radars.

Finally, in its complication of Dresser's claims to authority—cultural, cognitive, narratorial, and professional—the report beckons us beyond the panopticon. In his study of the connections between modes of seeing and liberalism in Victorian England, Chris Otter reflects that "since publication of

Foucault's *Discipline and Punish* (1977), with its memorable analysis of Bentham's 'simple idea,' the panopticon has become the dominant paradigm for understanding the visual operation in post-Enlightenment Europe."⁴⁰ Although she moderates this position somewhat, Kate Flint similarly describes "Foucault's theories," particularly his application of the panopticon concept, as "enormously influential with interpreters of Victorian culture since the mid-1980s."⁴¹

Following Otter, this chapter queries the "fantasy of omniscience" underlying the panoptic model.⁴² Here, I consider an encounter in which no agent had a monopoly on vision or, with it, power-knowledge, in which a Western expert could be treated with both reverence and skepticism by his non-Western guides, and in which the surveilling eye of that expert could meet with the similarly surveilling eyes of his ostensible protégés. In reflecting on such an encounter, I am implicitly arguing for a reexamination of scholarly orthodoxy pertaining to the operation of vision in the nineteenth century, particularly in cross-cultural contexts.

II

We shall begin at the epicenter of the blast—that middle chapter in *JAAAM*, in which Dresser denounces the Japanese report and attempts to offer a corrective account of his actions and comments in Japan. What is perhaps most interesting about the sections of the report quoted by Dresser is their positioning of the designer as a ventriloquist's dummy for Japanese mercantile interests—a

position that surely undermines his authority. The circulation of the document “throughout the manufacturing districts of Japan” suggests the possibility of heavy mercantile involvement in its preparation. But most telling with regard to the report’s commercial slant is its discussion of the international trade in sake, the Japanese alcoholic beverage. The report’s author, Ishida, quotes Dresser as saying that “since the opening of Japan a certain amount of saki [*sic*] has been imported into London,” and adding that demand for the product has remained low “due to the heavy import duty charged in England” (p. 220). Ishida writes that the charging of a high excise is based on a false assumption on the part of the British—namely, that the beverage is a distilled liquor and therefore worthy of such a charge. The Dresser of the report adds that “I have now examined personally the method of brewing Japanese saki, and found out the mistake of the English custom-house officers” (p. 220). The report takes matters further, quoting a promise from Dresser to “speak to the officers about it” as well as a suggestion about how to lobby the British government to amend its classification of the product (p. 220). A subsequent claim in the section does much to undermine the credibility of the report, however; Dresser is alleged to have “entered into contracts for the export of the Japanese saki” with the American jeweler Tiffany (p. 220), an arrangement that seems highly unlikely given the retailer’s stock in trade. Dresser does indeed make mention of sake in an earlier part of the narrative that was written before he was made aware of the existence

of the report. As the Japanese report suggests, he does quibble with its classification as a spirit, when it is “in reality a white beer made from rice” (p. 5). But he makes no reference to the excise applied to the beverage. While it is possible that Dresser later amended what he had written in order to claim that the Japanese had misrepresented him, it is difficult to imagine how this would have been beneficial to the designer.

The strangeness of this latter claim about sake suggests a number of possibilities, ranging from innocent mistranslation to deliberate fabrication. The fact that the abolition of the excise on sake would have been highly beneficial for Japanese sake producers leads one to conclude that the latter possibility is more likely. Dresser’s alleged promise to attempt to remedy the situation might then be read as an attempt to force the designer into such a position of support lest he be seen to have broken his word. At the very least, such a claim places the Dresser in the position of a puppet for Japanese mercantile interests. Later claims that Dresser offered further advice on Japanese export duties (p. 222) strengthen the possibility that the report was written with mercantile interests in mind. In this light, the report’s assertions of Dresser’s status, as a “very good authority,” and as the possessor of “an extensive knowledge and fine taste in matters relating to the fine arts” may be read as an indirect means of increasing the credibility of the document (p. 215). A text containing the words of such an

eminent personage would certainly be worthy of consideration. Advocates of Japanese mercantile interests would thus be able to claim the support of an renowned British expert when lobbying the British government.

Yet, at the same time as it presents Dresser as a superlative and, by implication, singular expert, the report also implies that he is a typical British subject in both the civic and scientific senses. The designer is positioned as a guinea pig, a test subject, by the Japanese who observe him. Perhaps in order to preserve the spontaneity of his responses to stimuli (that is, potential export commodities), his travel companions, Ishida and Sakata, took notes on Dresser's responses to art objects in secret. "Some time after he [Sakata] had heard my explanations," Sakata would translate Dresser's comments for Ishida's benefit and the pair would subsequently transcribe the comments in Dresser's absence (p. 224). As the designer surmises, "it was evidently not intended that I should know that this report was being prepared" (p. 224). It would seem that the two observers were attempting to guard against the potentially contaminating operation of their test subject's awareness by concealing their acts of observation.

Dresser's response upon receiving word of this observation is two-fold, alternating between confidence and insecurity. His confidence springs from the certainty that he may categorically correct the errors in the report by simply

stating his own version of events. After providing an excerpt from the report that attributes to him certain remarks about Japanese home furnishings, Dresser explains that “the last paragraph had arisen out of certain remarks which I made respecting the furniture seen in the houses of one or two Japanese ministers” (p. 218). He adds that “I am at a loss to know” “how a statement to the effect that ‘I observe the carpets, porcelains, and other articles of European manufacture in every house, everywhere’ can be accounted for” (p. 218). The “composition of [a] . . . paragraph” about the manufacturing of hardware proves “more easily accounted for” (p. 219). In this light, errors may appear easily remedied or at least dismissed, hence Dresser’s confidence.

The designer’s analysis of the report alternates between providing such ostensibly corrective accounts of events and sarcastically dismissing claims made in the report without explicitly engaging with them. An excerpt of the report containing the potentially compromising claim that the designer received “sums . . . by way of remuneration from [manufacturing] companies [that] sufficed to pay his expenses” (p. 215) is met with the assertion that “this is the Japanese notion of the object of my visit to the East: and while there is a good deal of truth in it, it also contains many facts altogether new to me” (p. 216). Dresser adds that “the manner in which my position as ‘Art adviser’ to some of our leading manufacturers has been misunderstood is laughable, but I need not go through

the various statements and say which are true and which are not, as my readers can almost judge this themselves" (p. 216). Once again, the report is met with a confident—even arrogant—response.

This confidence may spring from an assumption on Dresser's part about his relationship with his readers. It is important to note that Dresser provides no explicit clarification as to what in the preceding excerpt is correct and what is the product of a misunderstanding or fabrication. The vagueness of his dismissal thus allows him to avoid grappling with what has been said and potentially rely on the reader's assumption that the entirety of the report is inaccurate. Whether or not Dresser is attempting to finesse the truth, his response to this excerpt from the report speaks to an assumed rapport with the implicitly British reader. The use of the plural pronoun throughout the analysis of the report further suggests this compact between reader and author: "the next paragraph that we select is the most important in the report" (p. 219); "now we have a series of paragraphs which profess to set forth my opinion of the various potters' wares and manufactures seen during our journeyings" (p. 222). The reader is thus placed in a position of judgment together with the author. The implication here is that the intangible factor that is a shared but unspecified cultural understanding between the English-speaking reader and author will trump the Japanese report writers' direct experience of the events that constitute points of contention for Dresser.

The designer's confidence in his ability to correct the report thus rests upon an assumed commonality with the reader.

But we must not become lost in Dresser's obfuscations and lose sight of the claims that he is purporting to refute. For the finance-related assertions made in the report point to a major tension in *JAAAM*—that between art and commerce. A reader familiar with the designer's entire oeuvre might be surprised to note the anxiety occasioned by suggestions of the mingling of money and art-related work. In his *Principles of Decorative Design* (1873), the designer vigorously asserts "at the very outset" that "we must recognize the fact that the beautiful has a commercial or money value. We may even say that art can lend to an object a value greater than that of the material of which it consists, even when the object be formed of precious matter."⁴³ Dresser goes further, connecting artistic production with national wealth and development, a connection that constitutes the very basis of his work for the Japanese and British governments as well as various art traders. "Art knowledge is of value to the individual and to the country at large," he writes, explaining that "to the individual it is riches and wealth and to the nation it saves impoverishment."⁴⁴ Moreover, one of the lectures that Dresser gave once he returned to England (and before *JAAAM* was published) supports the notion that he was not above mixing art and money in the case of the Japan trip. In the transcript of a lecture published in the *Journal of*

the Society of Arts, Dresser notes that “in making a tutorial collection of both old and new things, and in preparing a report on the manufactures of Japan, I fulfilled my duty to Messrs. Londos and Co., whom I would now thank for the kindness and liberality which I received at their hands.”⁴⁵ The vagueness surrounding “kindness and liberality” notwithstanding, the designer’s outraged repudiation of the Japanese suggestion that he was financed by various companies starts to seem somewhat disingenuous in light of this lecture. So, in these instances, the designer does not appear to reject the mingling of artistic and commercial considerations.

Matters become more complicated when we return to *JAAAM*, in which art and commerce are presented as inimical to each other. This is most apparent in Dresser’s idealisation of the figure of the individual Japanese craftsman, who is completely divorced from any form of commercial exchange. Writing in the abstract, Dresser opines that “no thought of gain enters the mind of the great artist while he is engaged upon his work” (p. 180). Recalling a specific encounter with such an artist, he describes a man who “could not count money . . . and had little or nor idea of its value . . . his life [having] . . . been wholly consumed in his work” (p. 413). Moreover, “this was by no means a solitary case; and it is only under similar circumstances to these that we get those grand objects which both we and the Japanese so much value” (p. 414). Such a craftsman “enobles matter

by the impress of his mind, love, intelligence, and skill" (p. 180). He is thus vastly "superior" not only "to the mere buyer and seller of goods," the "merchant employing the handicraftsman [who] has secured his gains by acts of which he ought to be ashamed" but also, somewhat surprisingly, to many an English artist (p. 180). "Much of the work done by [the latter] is positively despicable, because his only thought has been how to make the most money with the least exertion of mind or body" (p. 180). In *JAAAM*, then, the artist who "at the very outset . . . recognize[s] the fact that the beautiful has a commercial or money value"—as Dresser does in *Principles of Decorative Design*—becomes a deplorable figure producing lacklustre work.

Yet the vehemence with which Dresser insists on this separation between art and commerce is ultimately undercut within the same narrative, suggesting that it is a point of ambivalence for the designer. Dresser's observations regarding the production of crepe scarves are most significant in this respect, wielding a double-edged sword vis-à-vis the question of art and commerce. He notes that "at one time this was a flourishing industry," but laments that "the European and American demand for a cheaper and still cheaper article caused a most delicate and delicious article to degenerate into the coarsest and most objectionable of stuffs" (p. 185). In short, commercial demand may kill artistic output. But the story does not end there. Dresser also notes that "recently an

effort has been made to revive the original manufacture, and, I believe, with some success" (p. 185). It would seem, then, that commercial demand may also *revive* an art-form, thus constituting alternately poison and lifeblood. The intersection between art and commerce may yield positive results. Such an observation surely undercuts the text's repeated inveighing against the mixing of the two sets of interests. It further suggests that the Japanese report, in drawing attention to Dresser's financial arrangements, points to a significant tension in *JAAAM*.

But what is perhaps most compromising vis-à-vis Dresser's stringent insistence upon separating artistic production and commercial considerations is the designer's own positioning in Japan and his vocational niche more generally.⁴⁶ In short, Dresser's work was situated at the precise intersection between the artistic and the commercial. In addition to being paid to produce art objects on a large scale in England, he was also paid to advise on the production of such objects in Japan, and, more specifically, on how to make Japanese arts and crafts more attractive to foreign export markets—on how, ultimately, to commoditise art. The designer's exchanges with various Japanese officials leave the reader in no doubt as to his trade-centred interests. For example, Dresser and Mr. Samishima—"a Japanese gentleman who speaks English well, and who is certainly possessed of great information, both respecting European and Japanese

matters"—talk at length "of the commerce of Japan, and how it might be extended to Europe" (p. 65). The designer is also mindful of another artistic/commercial task with which he has been charged—locating saleable art objects for a number of British retailers. A survey of the arts and crafts in one government building yields "nothing that strikes me as specially suited to European wants" (p. 136). Dresser also finds inspiration for British commercial activities in Japan, noting that "the idea of collecting together all the manufactures of a district, and attaching to each specimen the name of the maker, seems one which might well be adopted in England" (p. 152). Surely, he adds, "business might be increased by the foreign merchant seeing specimens of all our manufactures, and learning where he could get what he needed, without the long and laborious process of visiting all the manufactories in a district" (p. 152). Here, attempts to commoditise Japanese art inspire the same vis-à-vis English art. On a deeper level, Dresser displays an awareness of the connection between artistic output and macroeconomics when he declares that "the position of a nation is greatly depended upon the character of its manufactures, and upon the nature of the work produced by each of its handicraftsmen" (p. 152). Moreover, he frequently laments the presence of any impediments to international trade, for Japan's "own sake." "Until all [such impediments are] . . . removed," he reasons, "Japan cannot hope to become a great mercantile nation" (p. 183). Dresser is thus, by turns, a strident critic of the commercialisation of

artistic production, and one of its most ardent practitioner-advocates. The Japanese report touches upon this ambiguity.⁴⁷

The designer's larger career trajectory also suggests a willingness to strike a compromise between creative and monetary considerations that is at odds with the pronouncements made in *JAAAM*. Such commercialism is apparent from the very outset of his career. Although trained as a designer of household wares, Dresser initially attempted to fashion a career as a botanist.⁴⁸ Finding that such a career was not sufficiently lucrative to support a growing family, he made the transition to design work.⁴⁹ In his pursuit of material success in an artistic profession, Dresser would not be an exceptional figure in mid-Victorian society.⁵⁰ His superlative ability to market his designs and to both develop and protect his own brand does, however, mark him out as unusual among his peers.⁵¹ Dresser's writing was also an aspect of his commercial agenda; as Gere and Whiteway note, his "relentless programme of publishing was designed—effectively—to keep his name before the public."⁵² In this sense, *JAAAM* may perform the very mingling of art and commerce that it appears to repudiate on the constative level.

That mingling of art and commerce alluded to in *ED* was also apparent in Dresser's other activities surrounding his journey to Japan. Some years before departing on his travels, he had established the Alexandra Palace Company to

import and sell Japanese wares in London. Londos and Co. was established by two City merchants at Dresser's suggestion. Upon returning from Japan, the designer established his own import business (Dresser and Holmes) in partnership with the Bradford businessman Charles Holmes.⁵³ At least one of these companies liased extensively with the Japanese government-established art exporter Kiritsu Kōshō Kaisha, suggesting that Japanese authorities similarly mixed commerce and creativity.⁵⁴ There is, therefore, a discrepancy between Dresser's utterances in *JAAAM* and his professional activities. His outraged response to the suggestion that he received financial benefit for his artistic expertise—and the implication that this might cloud his judgment—perhaps stems from a partial recognition of his own conflicted position on this matter.

As with the mixing of art and commerce, the translation process constitutes a significant source of anxiety in Dresser's response to the Japanese report. While his analysis of the report is by no means anguished or suggestive of a major shift in perspective, it alludes to the possibility of a deeper questioning of the processes by which his text is produced. Translation is initially referred to only cursorily in the text. Describing a meeting with a Mr. Sano, Japan's representative at the 1873 Vienna International Exhibition, Dresser notes that "during our conversation (which we carried on through the kind and careful interpretation of Mr. Sekisawa) tea was served in native fashion" (p. 12). Here,

translation is mentioned only in an incidental clause that is grammatically cordoned off from the rest of the sentence by the use of parentheses. The narrative thus offers little consideration of the translation process prior to its examination of the Japanese report.

When Dresser reads the Japanese report, he is prompted to consider the translation process in greater depth. The designer poses a number of possibilities as he attempts to locate the source of the inaccuracies in the report. The first—and most reassuring—is that such inaccuracies only emerged when his remarks—initially made in English and subsequently translated into Japanese for the original version of the report—were *retranslated* into English. After all, even if “the Japanese translator succeeded in conveying to his countrymen the meaning intended, it is almost certain that the translation retranslated into English would be so changed as to be almost unintelligible” (p. 223). The agreement between my translation and the nineteenth-century translation from which Dresser quotes would suggest that the designer was incorrect on this account (more on this in the next section). In any case, Dresser concludes his chapter—and the first part of his narrative—with a more troubling possibility: that the original Japanese report was similarly marred with mistranslations. In such a case, “its publication is likely to mislead the Japanese seriously, and to injure my reputation” as it would

suggest that “I was trying to deceive the Japanese rather than to instruct them” (p. 224).

The presence of this competing account of Dresser’s time in Japan thus highlights the impossibility of controlling the fate not only of one’s utterances but also of the image that such utterances help to construct. In a sense, the report underscores for the designer the possibility that “Christopher Dresser” might be the product not so much of collaboration as of a combination of actions on the part of different authors not necessarily aware that others were also contributing to this common project. This would not be the first time Dresser would have to contend with issues of image control. As Gere and Whiteway note, the designer branded his products with great care and was forced, at times, to take action against “blatant plagiarism.”⁵⁵ The dynamic of “coauthorship” that produces Dresser’s image here is thus not merely a feature of *JAAAM* and the report; it is also a feature of the designer’s career as a whole.

Interestingly, the designer’s affection for “my good friend Sakata” blinds him to two more unnerving possibilities raised by the Japanese report (p. 224). The first is that the inaccuracies in the report might be the result of deliberate—and strategic—fabrication (p. 224). Rather, the translator’s possession of “but little knowledge of manufacturing processes” and the fact that “both he and

Ishida . . . could but seldom have recorded my remarks and explanations till some time after they were given," are adduced as factors contributing to the innocent but lamentable mistranslations to be found in the report (p. 224). Unnerving as the possibility rehearsed here might be for Dresser, he fails to countenance a second prospect that would call into question the work for which he bears direct responsibility rather than merely the Japanese report. In considering the translation process, the designer notes that "I found my good friend Sakata, so far as I could judge, an excellent interpreter; and when I explained the nature of our manufacturing processes he always seemed to make the person to whom I talked understand what was meant. But it is one thing to explain a new process of weaving to a weaver, or a new process of printing to a printer, and a very different thing to make a person who knows nothing of a process understand its nature" (p. 224). Here, the translation process is examined only in terms of its application to Dresser's role as a speaker. What is elided is his positioning as an auditor and, by implication, the words uttered by those explaining production processes to the Englishman. These are the very words that are synthesized and presented in *JAAAM* to an English-speaking audience eager to hear about hitherto unfamiliar methods of artistic production, and perhaps the chief source of novelty in the narrative. So, while Dresser acknowledges the possibility that the advice he has *given* might have been mistranslated, he offers no such acknowledgment vis-à-vis the advice he has

received. The latter acknowledgment would potentially cast aspersions on the veracity of Dresser's entire account of what he has witnessed in Japan. Thus, while the designer does register some significant qualms about the fallibility of the translation process, his consideration of such a process does not continue to its logical—and most unnerving—extreme. Moreover, any anxiety regarding the translation process gives way to a sense of complacency in the final stages of the narrative. Serious qualms about the process are replaced with a willingness to accept “hearsay information” that springs from the confident assertion that “I have no doubt as to the trustworthiness of what I was told, inasmuch as my informants were well acquainted with the matter of which they spoke” (p. 368). The shakiness of Dresser's singular hold on his own text is thus ultimately elided or simply ignored.

There is an even deeper sense in which Dresser's Japanese project—and not merely *JAAAM*—is troubled by the imperfection of the translation process. The designer's aesthetic project in Japan—and even through the course of his entire career—might be described as translational on a number of levels. Interlinguistic translation—imperfect as it is—provides the vehicle for the pursuit of this deeper project of aesthetic translation. It is necessary to first clarify what is meant by “translation” in this context. In his seminal essay, “The Task of the Translator,” early-twentieth-century philosopher Walter Benjamin describes translation as a

task that “ultimately serves the purpose of expressing the central reciprocal relationship between languages,” offering a glimpse of “this hidden relationship” between different tongues.⁵⁶ Paraphrasing Benjamin, Jacques Derrida writes that “a translation would not seek to say this or that . . . but to remark the affinity among languages, to exhibit its own possibility.”⁵⁷ In “re-mark[ing]” such an “affinity,” the translation gestures toward what Benjamin terms “pure language”—the “hitherto inaccessible realm of reconciliation and fulfillment of languages,” in which the supplementation offered by translation is no longer necessary and there is no longer a slippage between signifier and signified.⁵⁸ For Benjamin, a thinker profoundly influenced by Jewish mysticism, the encounter with “pure language” would also be an encounter with the divine.⁵⁹

Dresser’s project of aesthetic genealogy proceeds along remarkably similar lines and, in this way, might also be described as translational. Where Benjamin outlines a process of comparison between linguistic systems, Dresser engages in a comparison of aesthetic systems that should yield a cross-cultural genealogy. In this vein, the designer observes that “throughout Japan traces of Indian art are constantly found . . . and I have also found patterns of Persian, Egyptian, and even Celtic character on native work” (p. 111). Where Benjamin’s process of linguistic translation yields a view of a realm of “pure language,” Dresser’s

aesthetic translation offers the possibility of a union of cultures (and their aesthetic systems) currently separated. This becomes apparent in the designer's consideration of the different aesthetic forms tied to religious belief systems. It is here that "I may state my belief that most of the Christian symbols were derived from older religions, and that at some early time there has been a somewhat intimate association between countries now widely separated, and that this association has resulted in the use, throughout East and West alike, of identical forms" (p. 329). Dresser's aesthetic genealogy, then, ultimately gestures toward a Babel-defying cultural unity, although it does not offer an unequivocal statement that such a unity ever existed; it is, after all a "somewhat intimate association," not a wholeness, that he suggests here. Similarly, a key point of contention in contemporary readings of Benjamin's theory of translation has been the question of whether the unity constituted by "pure language" is something that Benjamin suggests once existed or merely a never-realised ideal toward which one should strive via the translation process.⁶⁰ In any case, there is a striking congruence between Benjamin's work on translation and Dresser's project of aesthetic genealogy, suggesting that the designer was "translating" between aesthetic systems just as a translator might between words. In reading Dresser's genealogical project in this manner, we encounter another way in which translation—and the related problems highlighted by *ED*—lies at the centre of *JAAAM*.

The notion that the study of aesthetic systems could be quasi-linguistic was also enunciated by some of the designer's contemporaries. Registering the designer's passing in 1904, the *Builder's* obituary writer described him as an "interesting talker [who] . . . never tired of discussion on Art and the habits of nations of the East, trying to trace their histories by their ornamental forms as a philologist does by their language."⁶¹ Dresser's chief influence, designer Owen Jones, also wrote in explicitly linguistic terms. In a magnum opus entitled *The Grammar of Ornament*, Jones described the various aesthetic systems of different cultures as "thoughts which have been expressed in so many different languages."⁶² We might say, then, that Dresser himself relies upon interlinguistic translators in his pursuit of aesthetic translation, a project pioneered by his mentor, Jones. The failure of interlinguistic translation constituted by the version of *ED* sent to Dresser necessarily leads to the failure of this larger translational project.

III

At this point, we should move beyond the excerpts selected by Dresser in *JAAAM* to examine the rest of *Eikoku Dokutoru* in greater detail. A fuller consideration of this report reveals a rather different picture of the Meiji public servants assisting Dresser from that painted by the designer himself.

Somewhat unexpectedly, Ishida (the author of the report) acknowledges his and Sakata's fallibility as translators almost from the outset. Like Dresser, Ishida conceives of translation as a two-pronged process, involving both literal, word-for-word interpreting and a deeper form of understanding. Both Dresser and Ishida attribute mistranslations in the text to a lack of this deeper understanding. For Dresser, it is the translator's possession of "but little knowledge of manufacturing processes" that helps to explain the translation errors in the version of the Japanese report that he receives (*JAAAM*, p. 224). In contrast, Ishida elides the issue of his and Sakata's knowledge of manufacturing processes and leaves open the possibility that this deeper understanding might be something brought about—or stymied—by the actions of the original speaker, the person being translated. Ishida writes that he and Sakata "tried to document every single remark that Dr. Dresser made about what he saw during the tour . . . That said, we were so busy during the trip that we were sometimes unable to ask Dr. Dresser to clarify what he had meant. As a result, we could do nothing but simply record what he said without really understanding it. Thus, some part of this document may appear unclear to the reader." Ishida goes on to "apologise for this [lack of clarity] in advance." This apology notwithstanding, it should be noted that his account could imply that the fault lies with the speaker, whose lack of clarity makes the job of the translator more difficult than would be

desirable. The apology should therefore not be read as a completely ingenuous statement, but rather as something approximating the statement “we are sorry that Dresser was so unclear.”

Frontloaded by a statement of the difficulties of the task of the translator, Ishida’s apology might be read, paradoxically, as a disavowal of responsibility for the contents of the report. This refusal to assume responsibility for the report is repeated in regard to the organisation of the document—surely one of the key responsibilities of both writers and editors. “Among seventy chapters included in this report, some may seem irrelevant to describing Dr. Dresser’s views on Japanese products,” Ishida warns, “but, since the purpose of writing this report is to document what he said during the trip, I dare not choose what I deem is important from among his entire remarks: I simply tried to retain everything he said. The book may look rather more like a logbook than a report, but I suppose it can in no way be amended.” Ishida’s caveat carries two significant implications. First, like the rider preceding the apology, the statement suggests that Dresser might not have been a superior communicator. In addition to this suggestion of a lack of clarity, we have here the implication that the designer might also have spoken on matters unrelated to his expertise. The second point to note is that Ishida presents himself here as a mere stenographer, a position of decidedly less responsibility than that of either an author or editor. A later

injunction that “readers should note that chapters of this report are based on the ordering of our trip, not on the types of goods and products discussed in the chapter” adds to this impression of an author attempting to escape responsibility. In this latter case, the authority for arranging the text lies not with the editor/writer—who would have to make judgment calls regarding the nature of different art objects—but rather with something more impersonal, that is, the itinerary for the trip. The sum total of these caveats is a diminution of responsibility for communication on the part of Ishida in addition to an attempt to apportion such responsibility more squarely on Dresser’s shoulders.

But “responsibility” may be too innocuous a term in this context; “blame” may be more appropriate given the suggestions of Dresser’s irrelevance and lack of clarity. Given this less than glowing endorsement of the designer’s authority, we need to reconsider Dresser’s presentation of Sakata and Ishida as faultlessly loyal but naïve neophytes. Indeed, later sections of the report suggest that the pair were significantly more critical of their English charge than he concedes in *JAAAM*. True, Ishida allows that “Dr. Dresser plays an important role in trade and commerce in London” and that he is therefore “knowledgeable about foreign products.” This commendation is counterbalanced, however, by yet another caveat: Ishida “must admit that his [Dresser’s] remarks sometimes appeared to be rather superficial. In commenting on whether certain goods sell

well in foreign markets, he seemed to base his judgment only on their appearances, and paid little attention to what they were and how they were made." Most damningly, Ishida adds that "his diagnosis on whether certain products sell well in foreign markets may well be taken with some caution." Paradoxically, Dresser's concern with the visible parts of art objects (discussed in the next section) blinds him to other potentially pertinent considerations. Given its explicit undercutting of his authority, it is wholly unsurprising that Dresser chose not to excerpt this section of the report in the middle chapter of *JAAAM*. It would surely have constituted one of the most problematic aspects of the report for the designer.

While we cannot be certain of Dresser's response to the aspersions cast on his design judgment, as discussed in the previous section, we do know that he resented any suggestion that his travels in Japan were financed by those companies for whom he purchased goods. The unexcerpted sections of the report present such a range of details with regard to the financing of the journey that it becomes difficult to dismiss its claims entirely. While Dresser had presented his trip as being motivated primarily by an interest in Japanese aesthetics, Ishida suggests that commercial concerns were at the forefront of the Englishman's mind. "The main purpose of Dr. Dresser's tour," Ishida writes, "is to look around Japan and China for the company [Londos]." The report also

goes into detail regarding the mechanics of the various businesses with which Dresser is affiliated. "When he cannot visit some places himself, he sends agents at his personal expense," Ishida notes before offering more concrete detail regarding the costs of the trip: "he is going to use 180,000 yen for his collection during this trip." The report subsequently credits the designer with "a wide knowledge about arts," noting that "many people visit him for his advice," before adding that "he works in an advisory capacity for several companies. His trip to Asia this time was funded by these companies, so he didn't have to spend his own money." Here, a laudatory description leads into a discussion of finances, with expertise being equated with the capacity to benefit financially. The same equation is then applied to Dresser's apparent interest in art objects: "he thus wants to learn some useful things and utilise them for the development of these companies." Dresser's work is thus refracted through a pecuniary prism. In the Japanese report, then, the designer becomes the antithesis of the financially disinterested artisan he so idealises in *JAAAM*.

Dresser's lauding of the Japanese artisan, with his perceived lack of concern for monetary recompense, is further complicated in subsequent sections of the report. The designer has been widely presented as being concerned with the welfare of the working classes. "Long before the advent of socialism Dresser advocated the equality of status between the designer, worker and

manufacturer,” Halen writes, adding that he “believed that all men, regardless of class, should enjoy the freedom to be creative and artistic in the true sense.”⁶³

Gere and Whiteway also write of Dresser’s egalitarianism, although they describe it in terms of an interest in consumer accessibility. “The ideal of bringing culture—and its perceived consequence, good domestic design—within reach of the working man” was one with which “Dresser kept faith,” they write.⁶⁴ In his earlier *Principles of Decorative Design*, Dresser enunciates a theory of the ideal relationship between commodity and labourer that is the antithesis of alienation. He asserts that “men of the lowest degree of intelligence can dig clay, iron or copper or quarry but these materials if bearing the impress of mind are ennobled and valuable and the more strongly the material is marked with this ennobling the more valuable it becomes.”⁶⁵ In this respect, Dresser’s reputation as an egalitarian thinker concerned with the fate of the worker might be justified.

While the figure quoted in the Japanese report does express some concern for the welfare of the worker, he also expresses a degree of callousness with regard to the same. “If we compare the lives of ordinary people in Japan with those in Europe,” he opines, “the former is much happier than the latter. In the UK, for example, no one in the lower class has his own house, and more than half of them cannot marry and get past a certain age. They work hard all day long, and still suffer from poverty. When it comes to the lives of ordinary people,

Japan is a very privileged country." But this concern is juxtaposed with the discordant implication that such privations might be desirable for the growth of the national economy. The above reference to the "privileged country" is followed by the qualification that "when it comes to industrial development, countries like the UK have an advantage: people in the UK are hungry and thus work very hard to become rich. If one wants to urge Japanese people to work very hard, one needs to resort to some special treatment." Here, Dresser appears to be striking out in favour of industrialisation at the expense not only of the worker's creativity but also of his or her physical welfare. Although he does not appear to address the fate of the worker, the designer is also quoted as urging Japan to move away from small-scale production in the summary of his findings at the end of the report. The fact that "factories abound in Japan, but each one has only a few employees" is presented as one of the "three deficiencies" in the Japanese manufacturing sector that "must be addressed." "This is very inefficient," Dresser is quoted as opining that "it takes forever to manufacture a small quantity of goods. In addition, manufactured products are unstandardised, so they differ widely in colour and size." This call for standardisation and large-scale production is surely at odds with the designer's earlier valorisation of the individual craftsmen, producing goods at a slow pace and on a small scale. The Japanese report thus complicates Dresser's reputation as a champion of the working man.

What are we to make of the image of Dresser presented here? Two possibilities present themselves. First, Dresser may indeed have uttered these conflicting statements regarding labour and manufacturing processes. Given that they present him in a potentially unflattering light, it would stand to reason that someone as concerned as Dresser with his professional reputation would then wish to either deny such statements or, more easily, to simply omit them when quoting from the report. Even if Dresser had made such comments, it is additionally possible that he may have uttered them partly in jest, with his mirthful tone being lost on his audience. The second possibility—that he never made such comments—presents us with two further questions. As in the case of the sake controversy, we must ask whether Ishida is innocently mistranslating his charge or engaging in deliberate fabrication. The latter possibility would again suggest that Dresser was being used as a mouthpiece for Japanese mercantile interests. Specifically, those Japanese merchants and manufacturers who favoured a more highly industrialised manufacturing sector could create an ostensible ally in Dresser by placing words in the designer's mouth. The comments about manufacturing processes and about sake may thus be read in at least two ways. In either case, they reveal the selectivity with which Dresser quoted from the Japanese report.

Further reading of the Japanese report does allow us to make one definite pronouncement about the comments attributed to Dresser, at least those quoted regarding sake. My recent translation of *ED* (specifically, parts that were excerpted in *JAAAM* and other relevant sections) is substantially the same as the nineteenth-century English translation quoted by Dresser in *JAAAM*. In both my translation and the nineteenth-century translation, Dresser is credited with offering to intervene on behalf of the Japanese in order to have sake reclassified so that its excise tax might be lowered. He is also quoted as claiming that Tiffany would be selling sake as a result of his intervention. The high level of similarity between the two English translations of the report suggests that any errors in translation would have been made by Ishida and/or Sakata, and not by whoever translated the report into English in the 1870s, as some Dresser scholars have suggested.

But while this matter becomes clearer, as is apparent by now, other aspects of Dresser's encounters in Japan are significantly complicated by a fuller reading of the Japanese report. Just as Ishida and Sakata appear to adopt a more ambivalent position vis-à-vis Dresser's authority, so too does Dresser appear more conflicted vis-à-vis the question of the labourer and industrialised manufacturing. Might Dresser have been coming to the realisation that his

concern for the worker and his embrace of mechanised mass production were irreconcilable?

IV

In a number of senses, the very existence of the Japanese report would be problematic for Dresser almost regardless of its contents. This becomes apparent if we step back from the details of both the report and that middle chapter of Dresser's narrative and consider *JAAAM* in its entirety. In considering the ways in which the existence of a counter-narrative is problematic for Dresser, we may further illuminate the nature of his engagement with Japan.

Upon initial consideration, one might assume that Dresser's ire springs from an understandable distaste for being the object of surveillance. Although the designer does indeed register such distaste, he is already well aware that he is under surveillance at a fairly early point in the course of his travels and certainly far in advance of his preparation of his narrative (which is when he receives the Japanese report). Arriving in Shidewara, the designer gets his first inkling of behind-the-scenes arrangements on the part of the Japanese. He notes that "to our surprise," the government official who had accompanied the travelling party to the potteries of Awadji two days prior has made a reappearance" (p. 78).

“Where the Government official can have sprung from we cannot imagine, for this is his first appearance among us today” (p. 78). While this incident only hints at Japanese government surveillance, Dresser is left in no doubt as to his being watched after a subsequent incident at the home of a local governor. There, a group of unnamed government officials among the party is described as being “like the Roman umbra, simply listening to what is said” (p. 178). Dresser is left in no doubt that “those Government officials who have been sent ostensibly for my protection have some in some cases simply recorded my doings” (p. 178). The trusted Ishida has also been engaged in such activities, his “pocket book . . . [doing] good service in their stead” (p. 178). Finally, even when Dresser chastises the governor of Nagoya for the actions of his compatriots—actions that amount to no less than a “system” of observation—the surveillance does not cease (p. 178). And yet, the traveller continues on his way. Given this pre-existing awareness, his outraged response to the Japanese report seems somewhat disingenuous, at least if such a response is assumed to spring from a simple aversion to surveillance. So how are we to account for Dresser’s reaction?

One way to read Dresser’s encounter with the Japanese is as a competition between texts and, by implication, for the expert status that justifies textual production, at least for Dresser. In “The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction,” Walter Benjamin writes that the end of the nineteenth century

saw "an increasing number of readers bec[o]me writers." He adds that "the distinction between author and public is about to lose its basic character . . . As expert . . . even if only in some minor respect, the reader gains access to authorship."⁶⁶ Dresser demonstrates an implicit awareness of this need not only to justify his claim to authorship but also to use expert status to do so. Returning to the very beginning of Dresser's narrative, we are presented with an "apology . . . for adding to the number of books on Japan," the reader having certainly "heard of the ways of the Japanese" (p. v). The designer must justify his decision to publish an account of his experiences by situating himself in distinction to those around him. Dresser's claims for distinction are based on a belief in his own expert status, as stated more than once in the preface to the narrative. "My excuse for writing is a simple one," he opines, "I am a specialist" (p. v). And it is "as a specialist, and a specialist only, [that] I submit this volume to public notice" (p. v). The justification for his claims to specialist or expert status would appear to be two-fold. First, and perhaps most simply, Dresser is possessed of professional qualifications that justify his claims to special knowledge "of many manufacturing processes" (p. v). Specifically, the designer received his early training beginning at the age of fourteen at the Royal College of Design. He also studied botany and received a doctorate in this discipline from the University of Jena.⁶⁷

Second, and more subtly, Dresser's claims to expert status rest on experience, specifically travel experience. He assures the reader that he has "seen almost every alpine peak in the land of Tell" prior to his viewing Mount Fuji (p. 2). Such a touristic resume frontloads and perhaps lends credence to what is essentially an affective judgment vis-à-vis the mountain—a declaration that it is "surely . . . one of nature's grandest works" (p. 2). Conceding the unavoidable incompleteness of his account, the impossibility of "illustrat[ing] or discuss[ing] fully the facts which I shall have to state," Dresser nonetheless assures the reader that "the conclusions arrived at have resulted from the most careful study of decorative art for nearly thirty years," a period in which he has "visited nearly all the museums of Europe, as well as some countries of the East" (p. 326). The expert status that justifies the production of the text and the claims made therein is thus predicated upon both professional and experiential qualifications. To return to our original question, then, we might suggest that the Japanese text competes with Dresser's account as a text. As such, it troubles the designer's claim to singular, expert status—the very claim by which *JAAAM*'s production is justified.

In the preface discussed above, Dresser not only emphasizes his expert status but also explicitly links such status to the pursuit of a particular kind of visual practice. This issue of visual practice constitutes another implicit point of

difference between *JAAAM* and *ED*. It is as an “an architect and ornamentist by profession” and as someone “having knowledge of many manufacturing processes” that “I went to Japan to observe what an ordinary visitor would naturally pass unnoticed” (p. v). This is not to suggest that Dresser conceives of himself as able to pursue this visual activity unconsciously. On the most basic level, such an activity requires a level of attention that cannot be bestowed when one’s surroundings are completely novel. Dresser thus notes that he was only able to “begin to make observations with some care” the day after his arrival in Japan, whereas on his first day in the country, “everything was so new that . . . details were passed almost unnoticed” (p. 8). His adjustment to his surroundings allows him to “mark more accurately what comes before me” (p. 8). Moreover, what we might term successful or “accurate” observation may also require prior research, “reading and preparing ourselves for the sights of tomorrow” (p. 89).

Just as there are correct ways of seeing, so too are there incorrect ways. On the most general level, such incorrect visions may be produced simply by adopting a particular vantage point—seeing “Japanese houses . . . in masses from above,” rather than “view[ing] them in detail” and thus “see[ing] their beauties” (p. 39). On a deeper level, this notion of seeing correctly is further predicated upon the binary of the trained and “untrained eye” (p. 354). Those in possession of the latter are unable to see certain kinds of distinctions, such as those between

“imitations [and] . . . original works” (p. 354). In all of these instances, the act of seeing is presented as anything but an unconscious activity. In each case, the implication is that the seeing subject must observe certain protocols in order to achieve results, to meet with success. Returning to the Japanese report, we might suggest that the publication of such a document introduces not simply a competing text, but also, implicitly, a competing vision. Moreover, this competing vision shows no evidence of having been gained via the observance of the protocols alluded to in Dresser’s account. When the right to publish is based on specialist/expert status, and when this entails adherence to particular visual protocols, those who do not observe such protocols can only produce texts worthy of repudiation. In short, the Japanese fail to see properly.

This notion of seeing properly is certainly not unique to JAAAM, nor even to Dresser’s oeuvre. In his guide to the London International Exhibition of 1862—which Durant describes as “the precursor, perhaps, of the taped exhibition commentary [and] . . . the first publication of its kind—Dresser explicitly positions himself as an instructor in the techniques of visual appreciation.⁶⁸ He also presents visual appreciation as a skill to be learnt and taught in his *Principles of Decorative Design*. “He who would judge rightly of art works must have knowledge,” Dresser insists, hoping that “him who would judge of beauty apply himself then to earnest study for thereby he shall have wisdom and by his wise

reasonings he will be led to perceive beauty and thus have opened to him a new source of pleasure.”⁶⁹ And Dresser was not the only Victorian to regard vision as a teachable skill. Otter writes that the period saw a proliferation of “specific guides to visual signification and urban detail” and that “physiognomic knowledge and training told one how to attentively use one’s eyes to distinguish the true nature of others.”⁷⁰ While Dresser does not appear to engage in physiognomically based observation in *JAAAM*, he certainly shares this notion of visual apprehension as a skill to be developed.

The report is also problematic in its implicit validation of the visual capacities of Japanese, rather than European, subjects. It is not merely seeing—even seeing in a particular way—that Dresser stresses in his narrative. Also of great importance is primacy of vision, being the first to see. Specifically, Dresser repeatedly trumpets his status as the first *European* to see certain sites in Japan. (Such primacy, of course, also begets another form of primacy—being the first to *tell*—that underwrites the designer’s text.) In the ancient capital, he is “the first European who has been permitted to ascend” a pagoda “from which we have a magnificent view of Nara and its surroundings” (p. 93). Similarly, prior to Dresser’s arrival, “no European has yet visited the potteries” of Sanda (pp. 76–), while the two who visited the potteries of Awadji “were in the employ of the Japanese government and, I understand, were not interested in the potter’s

wares" (pp. 76–7). In the latter case, European status by itself is insufficient for mounting claims of primacy; a certain kind of interest is also necessary.

The importance attached to being the first European to see a certain place or object is predicated upon a distinction between Japanese and European modes of seeing. Relating a visit to the Hamagoten, a palace overlooking the then Bay of Yedo, Dresser finds "the rooms and corridors [to be] . . . covered with European carpets of little merit" (p. 36). While such spaces might meet with the approval of the Japanese eye, "to the European eye the rooms appear to be scantily furnished . . . the chairs . . . [being] of the old round-backed pattern which was common with us some twenty years since" (p. 36). A similar dichotomy of vision is invoked in the designer's descriptions of the palace garden, where Dresser's (European) observation of a "westeria creeper, which when in blossom must look perfectly charming" is counterbalanced by an attempt to view the landscape with Japanese eyes: "but what interests the Japanese most is the fact that the whole grounds represent Chinese landscape in miniature" (pp. 36–7). The Japanese report, then, may be read as an implicit assertion of the validity of a mode of seeing that is presented as potentially antithetical to Dresser's own, European vision. It may also provide very real evidence of the limitations on the designer's claims to primacy by reinforcing Dresser's existing emphasis on the culturally determined nature of vision. So, perhaps the report is problematic not so much

as evidence for Dresser's having been under surveillance per se, but rather his having been viewed by those who do not observe the ocular protocols alluded to in his narrative.

Indeed, being the object of Japanese vision does not appear to be an *a priori* discomfiting experience. It would appear that certain types of Japanese gaze may serve to *reinforce* the Englishman's sense of his own primacy. And it is in this regard that we should consider his encounters with a rather different sector of the Meiji population—the throngs of townspeople and villagers who see Dresser in the course of his travels. The designer's first description of such a visual encounter manifests none of the discomfort that characterises his response to the Japanese report. "We stop, we look, we admire, we wonder. We are looked at: smiles of amusement at the interest which is taken in things, to them common, meet us at every turn" (p. 4). The repeated use of the "we (verb)" phrase here allows the narrative to slide seamlessly from the active to the passive register. The seamlessness of the transition suggests an un-troubling commensurability between the two gazes, between Japanese and European. This is reinforced by the assumption that these Japanese gazes are benign, amused, and happy, rather than threatening.

A subsequent description of the Japanese gaze raises this sense of ease to a new level, introducing the possibility of mastery by—rather than *of*—the European object of Japanese vision. Of his party's arrival in Sumoto, the designer writes:

The landing of Columbus could not have produced a greater effect upon the Americans than our landing . . . did upon these islanders. Adults and children, rich and poor, young and old, flocked to see the strange creatures that had come to their shores. They followed us as street arabs follow a Punch and Judy show in London. Even in Tokio a foreigner cannot make a purchase without a score or more persons gathering around him; but here the whole town was astir with excitement.

(p. 71)

Even if one reads this description as deliberately hyperbolic, its allusion to Columbus, another master of a less “new” New World, serves to endow Dresser and his companions with the power of colonial conquest. Moreover, likening the Japanese townspeople to “street arabs” places them in a subordinate position in terms of both race—if we read the term as not yet fully deprived of its racialised origins—and class, given the term's association with urban poverty. In this light, we might read the reference to “strange creatures” (which becomes “wild beasts”

in a subsequent description of a similar encounter [p. 126]) as an ironic regurgitation of an assumed Japanese viewpoint. Here, as before, there is no sense of the Japanese as a threat to the traveler. Even on a subsequent occasion, when police escort Dresser through a throng of onlookers “for my safety,” crowd control becomes simply “useful,” a term that hardly suggests a sense of urgency or anxiety (p. 126). It would seem, then, that an awareness of being the object of Japanese vision can in fact serve to bolster the designer’s sense of his own primacy. It is when such vision is exerted by authority figures with the power to publish—as is the case with the Japanese report—that it constitutes a challenge to Dresser’s position of authority.

There may also be ethical considerations that render the Japanese report problematic for Dresser. In concealing their recording of Dresser’s speech and activities, Ishida and Sakata commit what seems to be a significant transgression for the designer. As Sara J. Oshinsky notes, many Victorian designers—not least among them Dresser—subscribed to an ethical discourse of design.⁷¹ One of Dresser’s chief influences, Owen Jones, specifically equates visibility with good design, although he does not explicitly attach an ethical valence to it. In his *Grammar of Ornament*, Jones offers a manifesto in the form of a series of propositions, one of which is that ornamentation should be prepared so as to stand up to “closer inspection.”⁷² For Dresser, the question of visibility, of

revelation and concealment, is a matter of both ethics and integrity. The artisan who, assuming certain parts of an art object will not be seen, fails to decorate those areas, is committing an unethical act. Conversely, the artisan who decorates all parts of an object with equal attention to detail regardless of their likelihood of being seen is to be commended for his or her integrity. "No one can have failed to notice," Dresser asserts, that "all good Japanese works, as well as most which are inferior, are as well finished in the parts that are unseen as in the parts which are seen . . . the finish of the parts hidden is equal to that of the parts exposed" (p. 231). Such objects are "simple and unpretending, and yet worthy of the most minute examination" (p. 232). This openness to visual examination is also a feature of much larger structures, such as a temple, in which "every part of the edifice, whether seen or unseen, manifests an amount of honest workmanship which in its finish is simply perfect" (p. 230). Further, "in no part of the building can we find slovenly work, however small or perfectly concealed the part may be" (p. 230). Here in particular, the language of ethics, of "honest[y]" and "slovenl[iness]" is invoked in order to describe particular design choices. But it is not simply the case that openness to revelation is to be valorized and concealment derided; visibility must be proportionate. That is, "if ornament renders any part [of a structure] unduly conspicuous it is illegitimate and can only be condemned" (p. 259). In this highly normative theory of design, art objects should thus be open to being seen, but not, presumably, at the expense of

other parts. Such a lack of proportion would presumably distract from less conspicuous features of an object in a way that would amount to de facto concealment.

In addition to being unethical, concealment frustrates Dresser's pursuit of the classificatory aesthetic project that occupies a central position in *JAAAM* and was discussed in greater detail in section two. Following Foucault, Flint has written of a connection between an impulse to render all manner of things visible in the nineteenth century and the cataloguing projects that were such a prominent feature of that period. Only an object open to complete visual scrutiny can be correctly situated in a visually based system of classification. Such a system may also be historical in orientation. Flint writes specifically of the "fascination with what lay under London" as a "means of writing historical depth onto the site of the modern, just as examining the memory could help ground an individual's sense of identity."⁷³ One might write of Dresser's project in similar terms. Unable to examine an object in its entirety, the designer cannot place the object within his larger genealogical system.

This notion of (dis)honest design is also presented in temporal terms. In *JAAAM*, Japan is likened to a temporally distant England and associated with honest simplicity. While contemporary English design is associated with falsity

and slovenliness, the opposite is true of what Dresser terms “Early English architecture” (p. 244). The designer opines that

while our Early English architecture is simple and constructively correct, we find in the Later Florid and Decorated work much that is excessive and worthy only of condemnation: Henry the Seventh’s chapel at Westminster is, when considered in relation to its structural qualities, more false than any building I saw during my travels in Japan.

(p. 244)

English design is thus presented in terms of a lapse from honest simplicity to false complexity, the former implicitly allied with the architecture that the designer encounters in Japan. Johannes Fabian observes a similar dichotomy in *Time and the Other*, writing of a privileging of the “savage, tribal, peasant” past as authentic, and a concomitant denunciation of the present as “uprooted . . . [and] acculturated.”⁷⁴ Such a dichotomy is further underwritten by what Fabian terms the “denial of coevalness,” through which geographically distant cultures are construed as also being temporally distant, specifically located in the past.⁷⁵ The contrast between simple Japan and complex contemporary England might also be read as a manifestation of the overlap between two significant currents in

Victorian artistic discourse—Japonisme and medievalism. Victorian artists and intellectuals commonly praised Japanese art for its perceived resemblance to that of Europe's medieval period.⁷⁶ Writing in such a vein, Dresser finds that the "treatment of the drapery" on some wooden forms in a Japanese temple "reminds . . . me by its simple excellence of the best sculptured works of our own medieval times," while the Japanese "system of ornament" "in power . . . equals the best of our own medieval period," with "the colour [being] . . . equal to that of the finest illuminated manuscripts of the Middle Ages" (pp. 91, 262–3). Japan is thus situated in the past and consequently construed as a place defined by honesty and simplicity. In this context, the Japanese report, produced surreptitiously, can only be a source of outrage for Dresser.

Laudatory as Dresser is with regard to contemporary Japanese art and design, he still decries the changes engulfing Japanese society and waxes nostalgic with regard to feudal Japan. The latter society is regarded as being far more conducive to artistic production than that of late-nineteenth-century Japan. Lodged in a *daimyo's* compound, "the handicraftsman thus provided for had no cares or anxieties, and sought no money in return for his work" (p. 348). Dresser adds that "works thus made have an irrepressible charm" (p. 348). Meritorious design is thus most strongly associated with feudal Japan and—perhaps to a lesser degree—with contemporary Japan and medieval Europe, while false

design is linked with contemporary European society. Finally, as this characterisation of the life of the feudal artisan suggests, Dresser's medievalism may also be linked with the ambivalence regarding commerce discussed in section two. Like that point of ambivalence, Dresser's position on feudalism substantially complicates the conventional image of him as a proponent of industrial mass production.

Dresser draws explicit—and repeated—metonymic connections between instances of “honest workmanship” and those who produce them. He not only presents the Japanese as guileless but also associates this quality with an incapacity for visual scrutiny. “We shall scarcely understand Japanese art,” he opines, “unless we remember that the Japanese are a simple and humorous people” (p. 271). Invoking something akin to the quintessentially Victorian Theory of Recapitulation, Dresser goes on to note that the Japanese “enjoy a joke as much as a child, and there is a simplicity about their manners which has all the frankness of infancy. Indeed, we have here the charm of childhood preserved in grown man” (p. 271). And this presentation of the Japanese as guileless is repeated even in the absence of discussions of their artistic productions. An incident in a small town inn is of particular interest in this respect. There, Dresser

observe[s] two of the newly-arrived occupants of opposite rooms undress, and wearing literally nothing but a smile, walk along the balconies in front of the public rooms in the most unconcerned manner possible ; and, neither noticing, nor being noticed, save by the rude foreigner, proceed towards the bath-room, which the one enters while the other remains on the balcony awaiting his turn. There is certainly a charming simplicity about the Japanese, who, in whatever condition he may be, has never yet discovered that under any circumstances he is naked. I have seen at many hotels what to me were indeed strange sights ; but I never saw a lustful look, a lewd act, nor any manifestation of ill-advised emotion, inconceivable as this may seem to the European mind.

(pp. 79–80)

Here, the guilelessness of the Japanese, their “charming simplicity” is presented in primarily ocular terms. That is, to be guileless is not only to be incapable of subjecting others to negative visual scrutiny—to a “lustful look”—but also to be incapable even of directing any such scrutiny toward oneself. It is for this reason

that the Japanese person “has never yet discovered under any circumstances he is naked.” This innocent Japanese figure forms only one half of a racialised ocular binary. In the “rude foreigner”—the only figure to notice the naked Japanese form—we encounter the antithesis to the guileless Japanese. Where the artful foreigner *sees*, these Japanese, their eyes not yet opened by “rude[ness]” can only be *seen*. Finally, it should not be assumed that such a binary necessarily privileges the Japanese subject over the “rude” observer. As Otter writes, “the incapacity to be attentive also linked the desensitized with non-Western populations . . . When located in evolutionary time, as they frequently were, such humans could be viewed as perceptually backward, or ‘previsual.’”⁷⁷

Guilelessness, then, is not necessarily a desirable trait. In any case, Dresser’s attribution of such a trait to the Japanese makes Ishida and Sakata’s subterfuge all the more galling.

That metonymic connection between honest art objects with their guileless, gentle creators also extends to the Japanese environment. The innocence with which the Japanese bathers are imbued bleeds into the description of the entire town in which Dresser and his party are staying. Dining at the same inn later that day, Dresser and his companions “ask for a little brandy or wine,” hoping “to encourage digestion” (p. 80). They find, however, that “nothing of the kind is known or has ever been heard in this happy and

innocent town" (p. 80). Dresser's first description of a Japanese landscape is replete with terms suggesting safety and gentleness. "Picturesque villages" "*nestle*" "in some of the valleys, fissures, and gorges" and houses "*f[i]nd shelter*" beneath palm trees that, in turn, "*r[i]se high*" in "*sheltered spots*," while "junks of quaint aspect plough . . . the *shallow* waters of the coast" (p. 1; my emphases). Both the Japanese landscape and people are thus defined as innocent and gentle. The generalized connection between Japan and guilelessness can only make the report, with its context of subterfuge, unwelcome.

The Japanese report also threatens Dresser with a loss of control in its implicit questioning of his self-positioning as a taste-maker. True, the report's writers refer to Dresser as a "very good authority" (p. 215). But their positioning of the designer as the exemplary object of observation and, implicitly, the typical European consumer, surely conflicts with such a designation. In this respect, the report might therefore be read as problematic more for what it performs than for what it says. And *JAAAM* provides ample evidence to suggest an attempt on the part of the designer to position himself as a driver of consumer activity rather than someone who is driven by and participates in such activity. Writing of Awata wares, Dresser notes that "some are utterly common, and are only suited to the ignorant caprices of a European public" (p. 385). Here, the consumer is presented in a position of implicit contrast to the expert, a figure associated with

knowledge and rationality. Dresser is no kinder when describing his own experiences as a consumer. In a characterisation that will later be taken to an extreme in the work of Rudyard Kipling (see chapter three), Dresser associates his initial shopping excursion in Japan with a loss of control (albeit more pleasurable than in Kipling's case). During his excursion, he "find[s] many curios quite irresistible, and . . . buy[s], I fear, in a truly reckless fashion" (p. 9). These (sometimes subtly) negative descriptions of consumption contrast with the plethora of references to Dresser's role as a driver of consumer activity. The designer variously credits himself with either expanding or developing the trade in "Japanese translucent enamel" (p. 152), Arima basket-ware (p. 82), and purple lacquerware, the last of which he also describes as a previously "lost art" that his actions have "revived" (p. 154). Clearly, then, the narrative suggests the privileging of the role of the "taste-maker" or driver of economic activity as opposed to that of the consumer, who participates in and is driven by such activity. In its implicit casting of the designer in the latter role, the report might be read as problematic for Dresser.

The existence of the Japanese report thus troubles Dresser's claims to professional and narratorial authority on a number of fronts. Together, *JAAAM* and *ED* present a case of competing texts, and a rivalry for the expert status upon which the right to publish is based. The presence of the report also suggests the

existence of a form of visual practice that is at odds with that pursued in *JAAAM*. It additionally troubles Dresser's claims to primacy of vision. At the same time, it is important to note that being watched may actually reinforce, rather than undermine, the designer's sense of his own importance. Finally, Dresser evinces a belief in concealment—such as the covert writing of a report—as unethical and appears to assume that the art, people, and landscape of Japan are defined by their willingness to reveal themselves. Against such a background, the existence of the report can only be deeply vexing.

V

Hitherto, *JAAAM* and the Japanese report have been explicitly placed at odds with each other. But the foregoing analysis should also suggest that the texts are, in other ways, not merely alike but inseparable. It is here that I wish to introduce my central concept of Japanglia—the imbrication of Japan and England in this period, whether due to contact or coincidence. Most obviously, the texts are interpenetrative, Japanglian in a linguistic sense. Dresser devotes the entire final chapter of the travel narrative section of *JAAAM* to his denunciation of the report. The excerpts from the report are thus allowed to simultaneously bookend the experience of reading about Dresser's travels and throw into question the descriptions of art manufactures that follow in the second and final section of the text. To a great extent, then, *Eikoku Dokutoru* shapes the experience of reading

JAAAM. While the Japanese authors of the report—which was published before *JAAAM*—could not have quoted directly from Dresser’s text, they also draw on the same utterances, interactions, and experiences that are detailed in *JAAAM*. It would thus be specious to examine either text in isolation. Together, they offer a representation of a particular moment in Anglo-Japanese history.

The texts are also interpenetrative at the level of the individual word. Attempting to translate *ED* into English, one is struck by a problem—that of the foreign loan word, or *gairaigo* (外来語) in Japanese. Conventionally written in the katakana script (something akin to Roman italics), these transliterations from a foreign language are employed for concepts that have no equivalent in Japanese. Proper nouns taken from foreign languages are also transliterated into Japanese syllables and written in this script. Reading a chapter of the report quoting Dresser’s explanations of carpet manufacturing processes, one comes across the word *kaapetto* (カーペット), the Japanese transliteration of the English word “carpet.” In the Japanese text, the word stands as a residue of the English utterances from which the writer of the report has translated. In the Japanese report, then, one still encounters the presence of English. When translating the Japanese report (back) into English, the translator may simply employ the word “carpet” in place of *kaapetto*. But in doing so, s/he erases the sense of foreignness that attaches to the concept in the Japanese. *Kaapetto* may thus be a more

appropriate term. In using the term *kaapetto*, the translator does not simply bring an English word back into English, however, for the word has now been “Japanised,” and thus made foreign to English. So even a translation of Dresser’s words back into English bears the residues of Japanese. Like *ED*, *JAAAM* bears these residues of Japanese, most especially in the case of the artistic terms that are littered throughout the text. Terms such as *kakemono*, *sake*, and *hibachi* cannot be brought into English entirely; like the word *kaapetto* in the Japanese report, they constitute residues of that other language. In both texts, the same is true of proper nouns such as place names. Writing of Benjamin’s essay on translation, Jacques Derrida makes the point that the “debt” of the translator, the task that can never be completed, “does not involve living subjects but names at the edge of language or, more rigorously, the trait which contracts the relation of the aforementioned living subject to his name,” adding that “this trait would be the to-be-translated from one language to the other.”⁷⁸ Edwin Gentzler refers to these “names at the edge of language” as “marks, traces, affinities with other languages . . . present simultaneously and with the presentation of whatever the text purports to be about.”⁷⁹ *ED* and *JAAAM* are thus reciprocally marked with the presence of another language, of English and Japanese respectively. Or, as Derrida writes regarding Benjamin, “a translation espouses the original when the two adjoined fragments, as different as they can be, complete each other so as to form in the course of a sur-vival that changes them both.”⁸⁰ The interpenetration

of the two texts is therefore partly a consequence of the nature of the translation process.

In addition to being interpenetrative—and thus coauthoring a particular representation of Anglo-Japanese interaction—both texts might also be described as Japanglian in that they are coauthored in the more conventional sense of the term. That is, *JAAAM* and *ED* are both products of the work of multiple actors. Let us consider *ED* first. The report's full title—*Ishida Tametake hitsuroku eikoku Dokutoru Doresseru dōkō hōkokusho* [*Written Report of Travels with the Englishman, Doctor Dresser, by Ishida Tametake*—might lead one to simply attribute authorship to Ishida. But the words recorded by Ishida are a product of the interpreting performed by Sakata. And once those words had been recorded, they were “revised” by another man, Ko Eiichi (*ED*, final chapter). The version of the report that Dresser received was additionally translated by someone else. That nineteenth-century English translation being lost, each subsequent English translation of the report adds another layer to the co-authoring of *ED*, that layer being added here by the translation I produced with the help of a Japanese native speaker. *ED* is thus coauthored in a number of respects.

An examination of the preparation of *JAAAM* reveals a similar dynamic of coauthorship. Perhaps most obviously, Dresser engaged Japanese photographers

and illustrators who did not merely assist in producing the text but, in a very real sense, co-produced it. The designer repeatedly alludes to the involvement of these artists in the captions that refer to “native drawings of the fences which bound gardens,” among other things (p. 7). The excellence of these artists is frequently emphasized in the body of the narrative, Dresser claiming in the preface to have “engaged the best ornamentist in Kioto” (p. v) and in another instance to have “engage[d] the best decorative artist in the city [of Kyoto] to make coloured drawings of temple decorations as I am anxious to get all the examples of true Japanese art that I can” (p. 147). In the latter case, it is unclear whether the term “true Japanese art” refers to the drawings of the temple decorations or the decorations themselves. And the ambiguity is itself revealing. For the “native drawings” that are peppered throughout the text both depict art objects produced using Japanese artistic processes and constitute examples of such processes themselves. This is thus partly a Japanese text, however much its putative English author might have edited or arranged the various drawings in it. That we cannot say where Japanese elements end and English ones begin attests to the blurred, Japanglian structure of *JAAAM*.

Photographs produced by Japanese photographers—another element in the coauthorship of *JAAAM*—play a role in the text that is at once less obvious and more influential vis-à-vis the production of the text as a whole. As with the

illustrations for the text, Dresser stresses the expertise of those whom he has commissioned to take photographs for his account. He “engage[s] the best native photographer that I could find to take views for me” (p. v) and either buys or has “taken for me about a thousand photographs” (p. vi), including images produced by “the best photographer in Kioto” (p. 147). These photographs do not, however, appear in the published text. Although the reasons for this omission are not made clear in the narrative, one might speculate that the inclusion of such images would constitute too great a threat to the authority of the designer’s eye. Benjamin writes that the camera presents for viewing that which is invisible to the naked eye, “a persons’ posture during the fractional second of a stride.” In so doing, “the camera introduces us to unconscious optics,” highlighting the fallibility of the eye.⁸¹ On a similar note, Carol Christ and John O. Jordan note that “because a photograph seemed to offer a transparent record of truth, it assumed a representational authority that rivaled that of text and of graphic arts.”⁸² This might explain why illustrations were permissible when photographs were not. Otter offers a related but different possibility—the inclusion of photographic images would grant the reader a sense of his/her own involvement in “epistemological verification.”⁸³ Whether photographs revealed the fallibility of the designer’s eye or allowed the reader a sense of his/her own role in visual interpretation, the net effect would be a diminution of authorial authority.

The absence of the photographs surely belies their importance. The designer's journey was both long—four months in all—and tightly scheduled. For this reason, he commissioned the photographs as memory aids. Dresser's recollections of Japan are thus cued and shaped by the artistic decisions of a number of Japanese photographers. That said, the photographs may be equally significant for what they do not offer—an authentic Japanese vision. Allen Hockley argues that these early Japanese photographs were often highly contrived images designed to satisfy Western assumptions about Japan. He adds that the images were "often at odds with how the Japanese envisioned themselves." The photographs that Dresser relied upon in recalling his trip may therefore have been as much a product of his actual experiences as of Japanese imaginings of what he, as a Westerner, might wish such experiences to be. Like the art objects that I will discuss in the next section, they may have constituted Japanese simulacra of their own material culture. In any case, Dresser's vision was a product of both British and Japanese decisions vis-à-vis representation before he even put pen to paper.

The interpenetration and co-authorship of *JAAAM* and *ED* are symptomatic of a much larger cross-cultural dynamic involving nothing so neatly separable as hegemonic representation followed by resistance. Rather, in considering *JAAAM* and *ED*, we are encountering a dizzying, disorderly network of overlapping exchanges of aesthetic and cultural forms between England and Japan. Put another way, the interpenetration of the two texts at the level of the word is indicative of both linguistic interpenetration, which is revealed in the translation process, and a larger dynamic of cultural imbrication. Kate Sturge thus writes (in relation to museum studies) of scholarly “cautions against understanding translation” not only as “an exchange between polarized source and target languages” but also as one between “other and selves.”⁸⁴ This concept of a web of cultural exchanges owes much to Homi Bhabha’s notion of culture as “transnational and translational.”⁸⁵ Bhabha writes of culture as being constituted by the movements and concomitant adaptations between differing traditions, what Sturge paraphrases as “a process of mixing and mutual contamination.”⁸⁶ But it is Wolfgang Welsch’s conception of transculturality, with its overlapping identity networks (discussed in the introduction), that seems to be most appropriate as a model for describing this dynamic of imbrication.

Here, I wish to broaden my analysis by considering three elements in this network of exchanges, all of which feature in *JAAAM* and *ED*—Meiji Japan’s

internationalized elite, the international exhibition system via which this elite encountered its others on a global stage, and the aesthetic interactions that defined Dresser's involvement with the Japanese National Museum. I conclude the chapter with a consideration of the designer's ambivalent self-positioning vis-à-vis this Japanglian network of exchanges—a network by turns Japanese, English, and, in their overlap, both simultaneously.

The Japanese with whom Dresser spends the most time in the course of his travels are not those who cluster in crowds to greet him upon his arrival in traditional villages. Rather, they are members of an upper echelon of Meiji society characterised by their practice of cultural syncretism. Both of the designer's travel companions were members of such a class. In a "long history of overseas postings," Sakata, along with Ōkubo Toshimichi, had participated in the 1872 Iwakura Mission, a group of high-level public servants that had traveled to various countries to gather foreign ideas about nation-building.⁸⁷ It is almost certain that Dresser met with members of the Mission when they visited the South Kensington Museum.⁸⁸ His other companion, Ishida, had worked in both Europe and the United States for the Japanese government. Similarly, Sano had spent time in Vienna, where he had become familiar with Western techniques of artistic production (p. 12), while General Saigo had been supervising Japanese

involvement in the Philadelphia Exposition prior to his accompanying Dresser to Japan (p. 1).

Dresser's ties with these elites are significant in two respects. First, and on the most basic level, they facilitated his movement around the country, providing him with a guide and interpreter and clearing various bureaucratic hurdles.⁸⁹ According to Dresser, the emperor orders that he "should have every facility for seeing what I wished" (p. vi). "Through the kindness of the authorities," he is "permitted to travel in any part of Japan" (p. 63). Second, and more subtly, Meiji authorities determined exactly *what* Dresser saw in Japan. Interestingly, Dresser does not question the criteria for inclusion of a particular destination in his itinerary, instead assuming that those places selected by his Japanese connections constitute the best the country has to offer. When outlining his itinerary in the preface to the text "so that the reader may judge of my opportunities of study," he describes the "temples and shrines" he visited as "about a hundred of the finest in the country," (pp. vi—vii). The narrative largely downplays the extent to which the kinds of sights it presents—the "Japan" that it offers and omits—are determined by the choices of a Meiji elite acting upon an agenda that is never completely explained. Nevertheless, the designer's vision of Japan is clearly determined by a group predisposed toward syncretism.

It would be myopic to define this elite as mere colonial mimic men, to use Bhabha's terminology.⁹⁰ The choices made by these Meiji public servants cannot be characterised as simple attempts to hide their difference from a white metropole in the cloak of imitation. For a start, their tendency to borrow ideas and aesthetic forms from a wide range of cultures suggests a more complex set of relations to a heterogeneous group of others, rather than the mere emulation of one hegemonic culture. Moreover, this syncretism had been a feature of Japanese elite thought long before the Meiji Restoration and the "opening" of Japan that preceded it.⁹¹ This complexity becomes apparent in those scenes in which Dresser is visiting elite homes and institutions. There, Dresser is constantly attempting to delineate between Japanese and English or American material objects and practices. Visiting the treaty port settlements, the designer remarks on "beautiful villas—in character half English and half Japanese— [that] nestle in lovely gardens" (p. 4). Matters become more complex in the homes of the Japanese. General Saigo is said to live in a "wooden building in the English style" containing "an American stove" and "furniture . . . of European character, but surely of American make, and in pattern resembl[ing] English furniture prior to 1862" (p. 10). Dresser notes not only the "European style" of the decorations in Ōkubo's home but also the fact that the minister's Japanese servants "behave as Europeans" in refraining from prostrating themselves (p. 40). While Sano's

residence may be “thoroughly Japanese,” it contains “at least [two rooms] . . . furnished in European fashion” (p. 11).

Clear-cut as they might seem, it might be argued that the sheer persistence of these attempts at cultural delineation suggests the impossibility of such a task. Surely this categorizing impulse can only exist insofar as it can never be completely satisfied. Moreover, as one sees in Dresser’s visit to Sano’s home, the task is further complicated by the further division of what the designer sees into a multiplicity of categories that exceed the simpler binary of “Japanese” and “non-Japanese.” Writing of the marketing of Meiji elite interiors, Jordan Sand also seeks to move beyond a related binary—that of coloniser and colonised—arguing for a model in which Japanese elites relate to multiple others. Elite interiors, Sand writes, are presented in a way that flattens out distinctions, “impl[y]ing the interchangeability of East and West as styles—representational modes rather than essences.”⁹² This is not to suggest that distinctions between the Japanese and the non-Japanese did not exist—the unequal treaties were certainly proof of their continued legal force—merely that they were open to complication. And with this openness to complication, Meiji elites were fashioning themselves as syncretists rather than mere mimic men.

Much of the international work in which these elites engaged took place in another realm in which notions of the “Japanese” and the “Western” (especially English) were subject to complication: the international exhibition system. For example, both Samishima and Matsugata had represented the Japanese government at the Paris International Exhibition in 1878, while Sano had done the same at the Vienna exhibition in 1873 (pp. 65, 196, 11–2). Similarly, Ishida would work as an “exposition specialist” under Ōkubo, whose “initiatives included the [government] Exhibition Bureau.”⁹³ On the face of it, analysis of international exhibitions might seem only marginally relevant to a close reading of Dresser’s narrative and the Japanese report. But it is this system—with its polyglot army of artists and organisers—that shapes the designer’s vision of Japan before he even sets foot on the shores of Yokohama Bay. Indeed, it would seem that Dresser’s first significant glimpse of Japanese art objects took place at the 1862 London International Exhibition.⁹⁴ Rather than representing any kind of pure Japanese aesthetic essence, the objects he would have seen there would have been as difficult to categorise as those he would later see in Meiji elite homes. As Olive Checkland explains, “since the sixteenth century Japanese artists and craftsmen had been absorbing and creatively integrating elements of Western art and had continued to be influenced, as they had since time immemorial, by new currents in Chinese art.”⁹⁵ International exhibitions were

therefore significant not only in terms of who orchestrated displays but also in terms of the objects chosen for display.

Meiji elites were not the only people involved in organising these displays. In addition to observing them, English designers such as Dresser helped to construct such representations of Japanese material culture. Dresser would go on to participate in these exhibitions as a judge, exhibitor, and commentator throughout the 1870s. During this time, the Japanese established their own government agency for orchestrating showings at international exhibitions, rather than having Westerners such as the British diplomat Sir Rutherford Alcock do so.⁹⁶ It should not be thought that this development made for a less complex, more authentically Japanese cultural representation; non-Japanese designers such as Owen Jones and Dresser himself were commonly given responsibility for creating “Japanese” backdrops to displays and arranging art objects.⁹⁷ Japanese objects (and one must use this term advisedly) thus lent their aura of authenticity to Western representations of Japanese culture, creating the potential for what Mieke Bal terms a “reversal of ‘model’ and ‘copy,’” or at least the blurring of the two.⁹⁸

Further complicating any attempt to define Japanese displays at international exhibitions is the way in which the art objects being presented often

constituted Japanese-created simulacra of their own material culture. The bureaucracy organising exhibition showings tended to select for exhibition relatively grandiose examples of Edo art in the belief that such art would appeal to nineteenth-century Western tastes for the monumental.⁹⁹ Japaneseness became, as Sand writes in regard to Meiji interiors, another commodified aesthetic choice, rather than an un-self-consciously experienced reality.¹⁰⁰ In this regard, exhibition visitors witnessed not so much hybrid art forms as they did forms that were shaped as much by Japanese tastes as Japanese impressions of Western preferences in Asian Art—Japanese simulacra of their own aesthetics that could not readily be categorised in regard to a particular culture.

Dresser's donation to the nascent Japanese National Museum would provide an object lesson (pardon the pun) in the complexity of such cultural imbrication, both in terms of the arrangement of the objects and in their finer details. Here, we should consider the details that *JAAAM* offers us about the arrangement of the exhibits before moving out to consider the kinds of objects being exhibited. In addition to collecting putatively representative British manufactures, Dresser would assist in arranging the objects in the museum (pp. 41 and 45). After a period of traveling, he would return to the museum to find the manufactures "which I took out all nicely arranged [by the Japanese curators] in glass cases, similar to those at the South Kensington Museum" (p. 212). In this way, he both

participated in and facilitated the museumisation of his own material culture in collaboration with Japanese museum authorities. Dresser's involvement with the Tokyo Imperial Museum necessitated a degree of cultural self-essentialisation insofar as it forced the Englishman to consider his own culture—and, by implication, himself—in a highly selective, abstracted, and decontextualised form. As becomes apparent in the cases of Kipling and Marie Stopes, the encounter with a racial Other may presage self-scrutiny for Dresser. That subsequent moment, in which Dresser returns to the Museum to find that the objects he selected and arranged have been rearranged by the institution's Japanese curators, presents us with a difficulty in settling on a single author of these representations of British culture. In her narratological study of the anthropological museum, Bal describes the layout and composition of such institutions as a form of "visual syntax," with the curator(s) acting as speaker(s) or writer(s).¹⁰¹ In this particular instance, we find ourselves unable to settle upon a writer/speaker, even for individual "words." We are once again presented with a dynamic of transcultural imbrication, or to continue the metaphor of writing, co-authorship.

Dresser's self-essentialisation should not be taken at face value, however. While the objects he was arranging might have been typical British manufactures, this does not mean that they were paragons of cultural purity. As

with the Japanese exhibits at the international exhibitions, Dresser's still extant donations to the Japanese National Museum are symptomatic of a milieu in which one cannot readily distinguish hegemonic representation from the resistance of an Other due to the imbrication of the two cultures. Although Dresser brought the items to Japan under the aegis of his employer, the South Kensington Museum, he had selected and accumulated most of them himself. Londres, for which Dresser worked as an art advisor, supplied the majority of the items, many of which were also Dresser designs.¹⁰² Recent research into Japanese archives allows us to describe the items with some certainty. What was perhaps most remarkable about the designs—and Dresser's choice of them as representative British art objects—is the extent to which they were influenced by both Chinoiserie and Japonisme. The ceramic ware donations are most interesting in this respect. Dresser selected Minton pottery printed with the now-familiar blue and white Willow Pattern, Celadon ware that "imitated [those] designs found on Chinese ceramics," and at least one Watcombe design bearing the Orientalist design of a "bird on a tree beneath the moon."¹⁰³ These East Asian-influenced British wares, as well as the textiles Dresser brought, would in turn be used by Japanese manufacturers as guides to the desires and lifestyles of British consumers.¹⁰⁴ At the elite level, it would seem that the Japanese imperial family's subsequent purchase of Minton's Asian-influenced ceramic-ware was a result of this exhibition, while their British counterparts, the Prince and Princess

of Wales would come to “fully appreciate the art qualities of Japanese objects,” such as those shown at the international exhibitions.¹⁰⁵ Amidst this dizzying exchange of aesthetic influences, the consumer could be forgiven for becoming disoriented. Sato writes that the Japanese were major consumers of Japanese-influenced Linthorpe pottery, with “some of [their] . . . purchases . . . [finding] their way back to Britain as Japanese ware.”¹⁰⁶ The nature of Dresser’s donations to the Japanese National Museum is thus also indicative of cultural imbrication.

Finally, Dresser did not merely leave the objects in Japan to be exhibited in perpetuity. Rather, he made at least two more large donations to the museum.¹⁰⁷ In this way, he intervened in the essentialisation normally facilitated by the static exhibition, the presentation of the temporally bound and constructed as eternal and natural. Long after he left Japan, the designer would continue to co-author this representation of Englishness, and to do so in a way that thwarted the usual a-temporality of the permanent exhibition. His description in *JAAAM* of the process of arranging and composing the exhibition—a kind of textual “meta-museum,” to use Bal’s term—would also ensure that many readers were able to experience this exhibition of Englishness as something temporally contingent.¹⁰⁸ One might ask, then: in asserting their temporality and thus particularity, did Dresser also thwart claims regarding the typicality of the objects? Was what

appeared to be self-essentialisation actually an assertion of originality and primacy over the laws of the museum?

Dresser himself would vacillate in his position vis-à-vis this imbrication. *JAAAM* shows him embracing and practising syncretism on the one hand, and insisting upon both the existence and desirability of cultural purity on the other. In *JAAAM*, foreign influence is repeatedly figured as a corrupting force that threatens Japan's artistic culture. The English transcripts of Dresser's exchange with the Emperor Meiji are of particular interest in this respect. The emperor's speech provides a pithy encapsulation of the designer's role vis-à-vis the Japanese government, describing Dresser as having come "to Japan to display to the eyes of our people the nature and appearance of articles manufactured in Europe; and to point out to their minds the road leading to advance and improvement of arts" (p. 50). Both of these missions would surely conflict with a desire to maintain Japanese cultural purity. And yet, with jarring dissonance, Dresser's response to the emperor clearly expresses such a desire. Granted, he responds directly to the monarch's mention of his role with the Imperial Museum, promising to "from time to time forward to your Majesty's National Museum specimens of our most recent manufactures" and to "be of any service to your Majesty's industries, or be the means of promoting the commerce of your Majesty's country" (p. 51). But Dresser's response to the emperor begins on a

highly discordant note when he “humbly beg[s] that your Majesty may be pleased to order the adoption of such means as will preserve to your Majesty’s people their national arts in a form unpolluted by European influences, for the ornamentists of our western countries feel that it is their privilege humbly to follow the great artists of your Majesty’s dominions” (p. 51). The designer’s brief speech is thus riven by an unmistakable fault-line. On the one side lies a stated desire to preserve the perceived purity of Japanese artistic culture in the face of European contamination, to guard against the “European civilization [that] is likely to prove fatal to some of the finest monuments of the country” for reasons Dresser “cannot divine” (p. 43). On the other side lies a role that does not merely involve but is, rather, *constituted by* the expansion of European artistic and other forms of influence, motivated by a belief in “the value of certain European contrivances” (p. 41).

Ultimately, these two contradictory impulses—preserving Japanese art and encouraging foreign influence—spring from a deeper contradiction in the text; Dresser is, in the final analysis, unable to settle upon a definition of culture either as a zone of endless syncretism, or as a fixed, pure entity. His presentation of European culture as a contaminating force vis-à-vis Japanese artistic traditions springs from the latter conception. The designer’s essentialization of Japanese artistic output and of the Japanese themselves are of a piece with such a notion.

He declares that he has “engage[d] the best decorative artist in the city [of Kyoto] to make coloured drawings of temple decorations as I am anxious to get all the examples of true Japanese art that I can” (p. 147; emphasis added). And this “true Japanese art” is produced by “the Japanese mind, [which] delights in novelty and humour” (p. 372). In these instances, Japan is a single entity, homogeneous and stable. Interestingly, Dresser would also attempt to present English culture as a pure entity with the Clutha glass that he designed in the 1880s, a project that bought into nineteenth-century aesthetic nationalism. But, as Halen notes, “these Gaelic or Celtic-sounding products . . . [were given] names that were entirely spurious and probably invented.”¹⁰⁹ This latter fact would suggest that the only way to construe culture as pure was via invention, hence the designer’s conflicted position in *JAAAM*.

But Dresser’s essentialising of Japanese art and the minds that produce it is leavened with doubts about the purity and concomitant independent development not merely of Japanese culture but, ultimately, of any culture. It is Dresser’s attempt to construct an aesthetic genealogy by which he might situate Japan that does most to destabilize his belief in cultural purity. Upon inspecting one of the emperor’s art collections in Nara, he is moved to observe that “while the Japanese are the most subtle and delicate of workers . . . they are yet by no means inventive as a race. There is a good deal of truth in the statement that the

Japanese have originated nothing, but have improved upon everything which they have seen" (p. 111). (The latter assertion is also repeated verbatim in a later scene in which Dresser is examining Japanese lacquer wares; p. 345.) This observation is also registered in more explicitly genealogical terms, the designer noting that "throughout Japan traces of Indian art are constantly found . . . and I have also found patterns of Persian, Egyptian, and even Celtic character on native work" (p. 111). Paradoxically, the assembling of a taxonomy of cultures explodes the very notion of culture.

Finally, whether the designer thinks such cultural borrowing is desirable or not, he is disoriented by its capacity to blur distinctions between the authentic and the counterfeit. Examining a piece of Imari ceramic ware, Dresser notes that "this ware has been so much copied in Europe that I cannot divest myself of the feeling that it lacks an Eastern aspect. But this feeling arises from the fact that patterns which characterize Arita wares have been familiar to me from childhood, and I must confess that, viewed from an art point of view, it is to me the least satisfactory of wares" (pp. 392–3). When one's conception of Japaneseness is predicated upon the appearance of difference, the reality of transcultural imbrication can lead only to visual confusion and a somewhat sheepish expression of dissatisfaction. In a sense, then, *JAAAM* presents us with

the erasure of Japan as a culturally pure entity and its replacement with Japanglia, a syncretic, culturally coauthored amalgam.

¹ Christopher Dresser, "The Art Manufactures of Japan, from Personal Observation," *Journal of the Society of Arts* 27 (1 February 1878): 169-78, p. 170.

² For more on the circumstances surrounding Dresser's trip to Japan, see: Hidehiko Sato, "The Legacy of Dr. Dresser in Japan," in *Christopher Dresser and Japan* (Fukushima, Japan: Koriyama Museum of Art, 2002.), pp. 59-72, especially pp. 60-6; Widar Halen, "Dresser and Japan," in *Shock of the Old: Christopher Dresser's Design Revolution*, ed. Michael Whiteway (London: Victoria and Albert Museum, 2004), pp. 127-39; and Olive Checkland, *Japan and Britain after 1859: Creating Cultural Bridges* (London: Routledge Curzon, 2002), p. 91.

³ Ayako Ono, *Japonisme in Britain: Whistler, Menpes, Henry, Hornel and Nineteenth-Century Japan* (London and New York: Routledge Curzon, 2003), p. 23.

⁴ Dresser, *Japan, Its Architecture, Art and Art Manufactures* (New York: Kegan Paul, 1882, rpt. 2001), p. 12. All subsequent references to this text, hereafter referred to as JAAAM, are from this edition and will appear parenthetically in the body of the chapter.

⁵ Simon Jervis offers a good summary of Dresser's various enterprises in "Dresser in Context" in *Shock of the Old*, pp. 187-99.

⁶ Sato, p. 66.

⁷ Stewart Durant, *Christopher Dresser* (London: Academy Editions, 1993), p. 45n26.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Halen, "Truth, Beauty and Power," in *Christopher Dresser and Japan*, pp. 17-21, p. 20.

¹⁰ I refer here to Sato.

¹¹ Charlotte Gere and Michael Whiteway, "Dr. Christopher Dresser: His Life and Career." In *Shock of the Old*, pp. 17-45, p. 17.

¹² Durant, "Dresser's Education and Writings," in *Shock of the Old*, pp. 47-59, p. 58.

¹³ Halen, "Truth, Beauty and Power," p. 17.

¹⁴ *The Studio* qtd. in Alf Bøe, *From Gothic Revival to Functional Form: A Study in Victorian Theories of Design* (London: Oslo Univ. Press, 1957), p. 135n19.

¹⁵ Whiteway, "Introduction," in *Shock of the Old*, pp. 11-5, p. 11.

¹⁶ Halen, "Dresser and Japan," p. 129.

¹⁷ Halen, "Dresser and Japan," p. 127.

¹⁸ Halen, "Dresser and Japan," p. 129.

¹⁹ Halen, "Dresser and Japan," p. 127-8.

²⁰ See, for example, Ono, p. 15.

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- ²¹ Halen, "Dresser and Japan," p. 127; Gere and Whiteway, p. 38.
- ²² Gere and Whiteway, p. 40.
- ²³ Gere and Whiteway, p. 41.
- ²⁴ Halen, "Dresser and Japan," ppp. 134.
- ²⁵ Gere and Whiteway, p. 41; Checkland, p. 93; Whiteway, p. 93; Judy Rudoe, "Dresser and his Sources of Inspiration," in *Shock of the Old*, pp. 81-93, p. 86.
- ²⁶ Halen, "Truth, Beauty and Power," p. 17.
- ²⁷ Ibid.
- ²⁸ Jervis, p. 199.
- ²⁹ For factors contributing to the eclipsing of Dresser's reputation, see: Halen, "Truth, Beauty and Power," p. 20; and Durant, "Dresser's Education and Writings," p. 47.
- ³⁰ For a picture of Dresser as industrial champion, see Whiteway, p. 15.
- ³¹ See, for example, Elizabeth Kramer, "Master or Market? The Anglo-Japanese Textile Designs of Christopher Dresser," *Journal of Design History* 19, 3 (2006): 197-214; and Jervis, p. 189.
- ³² Halen, "Dresser and Japan," p. 138.
- ³³ See notes 2 and 31 above.
- ³⁴ Sato, p. 67.
- ³⁵ Bernard Denvir, *The Late Victorians: Art, Design and Society, 1852-1910* (London and New York: Longman, 1986), p. 4.
- ³⁶ Kate Sturge, *Representing Others: Translation, Ethnography, and the Museum* (Manchester: St. Jerome, 2007), pp. 2-3.
- ³⁷ Hayden White, *Tropics of Discourse: Essays in Cultural Criticism* (Baltimore : Johns Hopkins Univ. Press,), p. 19.
- ³⁸ Sato, p. 67.
- ³⁹ Sato, pp. 68-9.
- ⁴⁰ Chris Otter, *The Victorian Eye: A Political History of Light and Vision in Britain, 1800-1910* (Chicago: Univ. Of Chicago Press, 2008), p. 4.
- ⁴¹ Kate Flint, *Victorians and the Visual Imagination* (New York: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2000), pp. 7-8.
- ⁴² Otter, p. 7.
- ⁴³ Dresser, Introduction to *Principles of Decorative Design* in Denvir, pp.157-9, p. 157.
- ⁴⁴ Dresser, *Principles*, p. 158.
- ⁴⁵ Dresser, "The Art Manufactures of Japan, from Personal Observation," p. 177.
- ⁴⁶ Kramer is also alert to Dresser's contradictory positioning in Japan. See Kramer, p. 204.
- ⁴⁷ This inconsistency may explain the skepticism displayed by members of the Society of Arts when the designer spoke of the happiness of the Japanese artisan in a Society lecture. (See Dresser, "The Art Manufactures of Japan, from Personal

Observation," p. 178.). During the question-and-answer session following his talk, more than one audience member probed Dresser on his claims of the worker's lack of interest in pecuniary benefit. Dresser was ultimately unable to persuade them on this matter. "With respect to the wages question, he had found it very difficult to get any information, though he had been especially requested to inquire into it by Mr. Mounsey, the first secretary of the legation . . . there could be no doubt that labour was much cheaper." This concession on Dresser's part suggests that, much as he might have fantasised about separating art and commerce, he ultimately acknowledged the impossibility of doing so, albeit not in *JAAAM*.

⁴⁸ For an account of Dresser's education, see Durant, "Dresser's Education and Writings," and Rudoe.

⁴⁹ Gere and Whiteway, p. 29.

⁵⁰ Denvir, p. 7.

⁵¹ Gere and Whiteway, p. 32.

⁵² Gere and Whiteway, p. 30.

⁵³ For an account of Dresser's business dealings, see Halen, "Dresser and Japan," pp. 130–1.

⁵⁴ Halen, "Dresser and Japan," p. 132.

⁵⁵ Gere and Whiteway, p. 137.

⁵⁶ Walter Benjamin, "The Task of the Translator: An Introduction to the Translation of Baudelaire's *Tableaux Parisiens*," in *Illuminations*, ed. Hannah Arendt, trans. Harry Zohn, (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1968), pp. 69–82, p. 72.

⁵⁷ Jacques Derrida, "Des Tours de Babel," in *Difference in Translation*, ed. Joseph F. Graham, (Ithaca: Cornell Univ. Press, 1985), pp. 165–207, p. 186.

⁵⁸ Benjamin, "Task of the Translator," p. 75.

⁵⁹ On the influence of Kabbala on Benjamin's thinking, see Willis Barnstone's *The Poetics of Translation: History, Theory, Practice*. (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1993), p. 248.

⁶⁰ Paul de Man offers the most incendiary contribution to this debate about pure language in "'Conclusions': Walter Benjamin's 'The Task of the Translator,'" *Yale French Studies* 69 (1985): 25–46. See also Eve Tabor Bannet, "The Scene of Translation: After Jakobson, Benjamin, de Man, and Derrida," *New Literary History* 24, 3 (Summer 1993): 577–95.

⁶¹ *The Builder*, qtd. in "Dresser and Japan," p. 139.

⁶² Owen Jones, *The Grammar of Ornament* (Paris: L'Aventurine, 2007), p. 7.

⁶³ Dresser, "Truth, Beauty and Power," p. 18.

⁶⁴ Gere and Whiteway, pp. 25–6.

⁶⁵ Dresser, *Principles*, pp. 158–9.

⁶⁶ Walter Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction," in *Illuminations*, pp. 219–53, pp. 233–4.

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- ⁶⁷ Whiteway, "Introduction," p. 14.
- ⁶⁸ Durant, "Dresser's Education and Writings," p. 54.
- ⁶⁹ Dresser, *Principles*, p. 158.
- ⁷⁰ Otter, p. 51.
- ⁷¹ Sara J. Oshinsky, "Christopher Dresser (1834–1904)," in *Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History* (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2000)
http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/cdrs/hd_cdrs.htm (October 2006).
- ⁷² Jones, p. 9.
- ⁷³ Flint, p. 34.
- ⁷⁴ Johannes Fabian, *Time and the Other* (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1983), p. 11.
- ⁷⁵ Fabian, p. 31.
- ⁷⁶ Halen, "Dresser and Japan," p. 129.
- ⁷⁷ Otter, p. 57.
- ⁷⁸ Derrida, p. 185.
- ⁷⁹ Edwin Gentzler, *Contemporary Translation Theories* (London and New York: Routledge, 1993), p. 167.
- ⁸⁰ Derrida, pp. 190–1.
- ⁸¹ Benjamin, "The Work of Art," pp. 238–9.
- ⁸² Carol T. Christ and John. O. Jordan, "Introduction" in *Victorian Literature and the Victorian Visual Imagination*, ed. Christ and Jordan (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), xix–xxvii, pp. xxv.
- ⁸³ Otter, p. 53.
- ⁸⁴ Sturge, p. 11.
- ⁸⁵ Homi. K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (New York: Routledge, 1994), p. 5.
- ⁸⁶ Sturge, p. 12.
- ⁸⁷ Sato, p. 70n32.
- ⁸⁸ Checkland, p. 86.
- ⁸⁹ Sato, p. 60.
- ⁹⁰ Bhabha, pp. 85–92.
- ⁹¹ See Ellen P. Conant, "Introduction: Historiographical Overview," in *Challenging Past and Present: The Metamorphosis of Nineteenth-Century Japanese Art*, ed. Conant (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2006), pp. 1–30, p. 16. Marius B. Jansen, "Cultural Change in Nineteenth-Century Japan," in *Challenging Past and Present*, pp. 31–55, p. 34.
- ⁹² Jordan Sand, "Was Meiji Taste in Interiors 'Orientalist'?" *positions: east asia cultures critique* 8, 3 (Winter 2000): 637–73, p. 664.
- ⁹³ Sato, p. 70n32; Checkland, p. 31.
- ⁹⁴ Dresser, "The Art Manufactures of Japan, from Personal Observation," p. 169.
- ⁹⁵ Checkland, p. 16.
- ⁹⁶ Sato, p. 60.

⁹⁷ Gere and Whiteway, p. 23.

⁹⁸ Mieke Bal, *Looking In: The Art of Viewing*. New York: Routledge, 2001, p. 140.

⁹⁹ Conant, "Refractions of the Rising Sun: Japan's Participation in International Exhibitions," in *Japan and Britain: An Aesthetic Dialogue, 1850-1930* ed. Sato Tomoko and Watanabe Toshio (London, Lund Humphries in association with the Barbican Art Gallery and the Setagaya Art Museum, 1991), pp. 78-93, p. 88.

¹⁰⁰ Sand, p. 664.

¹⁰¹ Bal, p. 145.

¹⁰² Sato, p. 61.

¹⁰³ Sato, pp. 61-2.

¹⁰⁴ Sato, p. 64.

¹⁰⁵ Sato, p. 62; Dresser, "The Art Manufactures of Japan, from Personal Observation," p. 169.

¹⁰⁶ Halen, "Dresser and Japan," p. 137.

¹⁰⁷ Sato, pp. 62-3.

¹⁰⁸ Bal, p. 121.

¹⁰⁹ Halen, "Truth, Beauty and Power," pp. 18-9.

Chapter Two

Edo at the Savoy:

The Floating World of *The Mikado*

If you want to know who we are,
 We are gentlemen of Japan:
 On many a vase and jar—
 On many a screen and fan,
 We figure in lively paint:
 Our attitude's queer and quaint—
 You're wrong if you think it ain't, oh!
 —Chorus of Nobles, Act I, *The Mikado*¹

Nestled among the classified advertisements in the March 14, 1885 issue of *The Era*, a London weekly, one finds a notice for “an entirely Original Japanese Opera.”² Lacking further information, one could be forgiven for thinking that Victorian London would be playing host to a kabuki or noh performance. The production to which the advertisement refers, however, is W. S. Gilbert and Arthur Sullivan’s *Mikado*, which was soon to become the duo’s most commercially successful opera.³ The terms in which it was marketed—its

characterisation as “an entirely Original Japanese Opera”—would bleed into the initial press coverage of the opera. The “London Theatres” column in the same issue of *The Era* refers to “the rehearsal of the new Japanese opera to be produced this evening.”⁴ An article penned by a critic who had viewed that rehearsal appeared in *The Times* under the headline “A Japanese Opera.”⁵ While not necessarily mouthing the words of the opera’s promoters, the theatre reporter for the *Daily News*, who had also viewed the rehearsal, would note that “the subject of the book is Japanese.”⁶ Similarly, the critic for *The Bristol Mercury and Daily Post* would declare the opera “as Japanese as its title suggests.”⁷ In another item in the same issue of the *Mercury*, one is informed that *The Mikado* “caricatures Japanese life.”⁸ What could it mean to declare the “subject of the book” or the opera as a whole to be Japanese? The first claim—regarding the book—could be read to refer only to plot line, while the second, with its blanket reference to the opera, could refer to any or all aspects of the production. That most common designation, “an entirely Original Japanese Opera,” reads most ambiguously of all, referring potentially to an opera completely Japanese in origin, an opera in Japanese, or even an opera of ambiguous origin that put forward a newly formulated (“Original”) notion of Japaneseness. The term “Original” could alternatively be read as closer in meaning to “aboriginal,” connoting indigeneity and with it, a lack of foreign interference in the presentation of Japan—Japan in its original form. Among the welter of reviews and advertising, then, there is

neither a clear definition nor a quantification of the opera's Japaneseness. But regardless of what it might designate, the term "Japanese" sounds repeatedly in these early reviews of the opera.

Alongside these repeated assertions of the opera's Japaneseness—however the term might be meant—the reader also encounters frequent pronouncements regarding its familiarity and its Englishness, sometimes within the same article. That review for *The Times*, with its promise of a "Japanese opera," cautions that "[t]he characters, or at least the types of the drama, are the same [as other Gilbert and Sullivan operas] although they wear their robes with a difference." "No attempt," the critic opines, "has been made to mingle the slightest infusion of Eastern imagery or quaintness with the dialogue or the lyrics, which run throughout in the well-worn grooves of burlesque." Similarly, the critic for the *Aberdeen Weekly Journal* draws the reader's attention to the "thoroughly Japanese" "character of the whole production," while also noting the presence of Gilbert's "topsy-turvy ideas" and Sullivan's use of "early English madrigalian style."⁹ I want to return to that moment of ambiguity. Victorian critics appear to have simultaneously dismissed and bought into the rhetoric of *The Mikado's* promoters, characterising the opera as, by turns, undoubtedly Japanese, and obviously English. This initial ambiguity, I argue, speaks to the curiously Japanglian character of the most successful of the Savoy operas.

This early vacillation has subsequently been replaced by a far less nuanced position: *The Mikado*, twentieth- and twenty-first-century critics have asserted, is simply not about Japan. In the most oft-cited version of this argument, G. K. Chesterton noted in 1930 that “there is not, in the whole length of *The Mikado* a single joke that is a joke against Japan.” For Chesterton, Japan functioned as a mere “frame ... [a] veil or fiction.”¹⁰ With the passage of eighty years, during which numerous other aspects of the opera have been subject to critical investigation, one could be forgiven for assuming that responses to the question of the Japaneseness of the opera would have taken on a less dismissive character. Yet, with perhaps only a single exception (that of Josephine Lee, discussed later), this has not been the case. Writers on the subject such as Arai Megumi, Ian Bradley, Michael Ffinch, Carol Brahms, and Leslie Baily all quote Chesterton uncritically, with others echoing his certainty on this point.¹¹ Chesterton enunciates two key tenets of the orthodox position on the question of the Japanese presence in *The Mikado*. The first is that the opera satirises purely English subjects. This is echoed in contemporary assertions that, as Gayden Wren has put it, “it isn’t about Japan” or, as Bradley writes, *The Mikado* “is quite clearly about England ... its satire directed at domestic rather than foreign targets.”¹² Even E. P. Lawrence, writing on the British government’s 1907 decision to ban the opera on the ground that it might offend the Japanese, advances such a

position.¹³ One should note here that the terms of the argument are restricted to such an extent as to almost foreclose any possibility of dissent. Analysis of the issue of the relationship between the opera and things Japanese is confined to the question of whether the text is “about Japan.” Few would attempt to argue that *The Mikado* takes Japanese life as its primary concern, compelling the majority to adopt the default position that the opera is indeed not about Japan. But such a view is both unnecessarily and myopically restrictive; as Elaine Freedgood notes, “the explicit subjects of fiction are not the only subjects of fiction.”¹⁴

The second tenet of the argument characterises the Japanese presence in the opera as mere window dressing, and carries with it the implication of a specious dichotomy of Japanese form and English content. The Japanese element in the text is variously a “looking-glass” offering an English reflection, a “façade,” a “disguise.”¹⁵ Proponents of this argument tend to emphasise that the exotic setting was necessary as a camouflage for satire that would have proven too biting for the opera’s Victorian audience. This underestimates the audience’s appreciation for humour at its own expense. Indeed, mainstream publications such as *Punch* made this kind of humour their stock in trade. Furthermore, first-night reviews often criticized the production for its staleness, opining that the Gilbertian jokes were wearing thin. While describing the opera as a “frank success,” the critic for *The Academy* also warned that “almost the only objection

we can make ... is that it is not absolutely fresh."¹⁶ For *The Athenaeum*'s critic, similarly, "the vein of topsyturvydom which had so long worked with success at length show[ed] signs of exhaustion."¹⁷ Contemporary sources thus refute the argument that the Japanese setting functions as camouflage for hard-hitting, characteristically English satire.

While those who dismiss the notion of a Japanese dimension to the opera are certainly in the critical majority, there are still others who advance dissenting views. Many of these are Japanese authors whose work deviates from critical orthodoxy simply by virtue of their willingness to consider the question of the relationship between *The Mikado* and Japanese culture. With regard to Japanese musical elements, musicologist Michael Beckerman makes a convincing case that Sullivan includes quasi-Oriental features in his score.¹⁸ Chiba Yoko and Atsushi Koyano both draw connections between the opera and Victorian interest in Japan, as do Inose Naoki and Miyazawa Shin'ichi.¹⁹ On a deeper level, Aizawa Yoshihisa and Arai reject the orthodox Japanese form/English content dichotomy, Aizawa contending that "one cannot isolate Japan from the targets of satire."²⁰ And while he does initially reiterate the now-axiomatic line that the text has no connection with Japan, Kanayama Ryota ultimately concludes that the text's employment of a corrupted, commodified "Japan" is paradigmatic of Western uses of Japanese culture.²¹ Dissenting voices are to be heard, then,

particularly in Japanese. But none of these authors pursues the matter in any depth; none offers a close reading of the opera in light of this argument.

Josephine Lee's *The Japan of Pure Invention: Gilbert and Sullivan's "The Mikado"* (2010) is perhaps the first scholarly work to take up the challenge of a sustained close reading of the opera that proceeds from an assumption that race—specifically Japaneseness—is relevant to an understanding of the opera. Considering numerous iterations of the opera, including swing and jazz versions, Lee argues that “initial *Mikado* productions bring into relief the relationship between race and commodity fetishism.”²² Specifically, “the opera is a prime example of how the understanding of racial difference can be understood by the interaction of consumers and goods rather than by experiences of bodily contact.”²³ Lee considers *The Mikado* as a phenomenon—an efflorescence of *Mikados* that also draws in the Japanese Village exhibitions that helped to inspire the initial staging of the opera.²⁴

Invaluable as Lee's study is, it does not dig as deeply as it might in considering the commodities that it places at the centre of an understanding of the opera. Rather, Lee tends to take these material objects—vases, jars, screens, fans—simply as commodities. To be sure, doing so allows her to place the text within a network of racialised economic relations. But discussing commodities

qua commodities (and *only* qua commodities) also erases the materiality and specificity of these objects. Japanese objets d'art become simply markers of the exotic, of their bearers' capacity to consume. In this respect, Lee's study might partially strengthen the mystique of commodity fetishism even as it attempts to engage in a project of demystification. As Freedgood argues, we have to read objects "both literally and figurally," as both physical, particular objects as well as instances of commodity fetishism, for "if we stay with only one pole of the interpretive process we incur the kind of loss Marx described when he described commodity fetishism."²⁵

In this chapter, then, I hope to take up where Lee leaves off, to add a more literal reading of the text and its objects to the largely figural analysis offered in *The Japan of Pure Invention*. I argue that the circumstances in which the decorative and visual arts that feature in *The Mikado* were developed and consumed suggest a paradigm via which to pursue a close reading of the opera. Specifically, the opera's vision of Japan is shaped by the aesthetic particularity and physicality of the screens, jars, vases, and fans to which its libretto makes reference. These objects were both produced and received with what I term a peculiarly Japanglian vision. On the production side, both Japanese and English artisans and manufacturers created art objects that, through a centuries-long process of mutual influence, could no longer be termed either English or Japanese in any

simple sense. On the consumption side, this exchange of artistic influence meant that buyers of such objects were no better at recognising instantiations of an English aesthetic than they were at recognising a Japanese equivalent. Profoundly influenced by a notion of Japan defined, as Lee has noted, in terms of objects, Gilbert and Sullivan also saw through a blurred Japanglian lens.

In the previous chapter, I described the decorative art objects that design reform advocate Christopher Dresser brought to the Japanese National Museum as typical examples of English craftsmanship. As these are precisely the kinds of objects referenced in *The Mikado's* libretto and used in its initial staging, it is worth returning to these objects here. As noted in the previous chapter, these examples of English ceramic ware, produced by companies such as Minton, Watcombe, and Linthorpe, were heavily influenced by East Asian aesthetics. Japanese elites would purchase such objects as examples of an exotic Englishness, while their English counterparts would typically buy such objects merchandised as Japanese or simply "Oriental." Perhaps unsurprisingly, then, some of the Asian-influenced English ceramic goods purchased by Japanese elites found "their way back to Britain as Japanese ware."²⁶ Qualities observed to be typically English by one consumer might be seen as quintessentially Japanese by another.

The same racial indeterminacy defines what I take to be the most significant “Japanese” artistic influence on the opera—*ukiyo-e* (浮世絵), images (*e*) of the floating (*uki*) world (*yo*). Best known for their depictions of the decadent, transient (floating) world of the Edo (now Tokyo) pleasure quarters and kabuki theatres, *ukiyo-e* images were painted or printed onto a wide range of media, from scrolls to illustrated books to screens.²⁷ Such images were widely available in nineteenth-century England as well as on the Continent. Indeed, when writing *The Mikado* and formulating its staging, W. S. Gilbert relied on an illustrated text replete with such images—*Tales of Old Japan*, penned by the librettist’s acquaintance and former ambassador to Japan, A. B. Mitford (Lord Redesdale).²⁸ While others have acknowledged the impact of the decorative arts on the staging of *The Mikado*, none appears to have considered the possibly greater impact of the visual arts. In this chapter, I consider *ukiyo-e* to be much more than a source for theatrical window-dressing. Rather, I argue that the kind of world typically depicted in this form of painting/printing—one of fleeting, urbane pleasure—and the methods by which that world was depicted together constitute a model for both the libretto and staging of *The Mikado*. In their Japanglian indeterminacy, both decorative art objects and works of visual art in the form of *ukiyo-e* provide a way of reading a text in which characteristics typically identified as English might equally be read as Japanese and vice versa. The connection between the opera and Japanese art objects is thus both literal, in that such objects are

physically present in the opera's staging, mentioned in the libretto, and historically served as inspiration, and figural, in that the objects offer a paradigm for reading the opera.

In taking objects seriously, this reading of the opera simultaneously embraces one scholarly tendency and quibbles with another. The emphasis on material goods, and on such goods as legible, is very much of a piece with recent scholarship on Victorian literature and culture. Freedgood's *The Ideas in Things* offers perhaps the most thoroughgoing pursuit of the object in its path through the Victorian novel. The many similarities with the methodology of Freedgood's study notwithstanding, this chapter differs in that it not only considers an *anti-realist* text but also includes visual art objects under the rubric of "things." This study of *The Mikado* also rejects another distinction, one commonly put forward in analyses of the influence of Japan on European art: that of *japonaiserie* and *japonisme*. The former term is commonly used to designate the superficial use of Japanese objects in European visual art for the purpose of adding a note of exoticism to traditional artistic realism. The latter, *japonisme*, is commonly considered the more dignified of the pair, being used to designate European art that demonstrates an assimilation of Japanese artistic techniques. If one accepts objects as both important and legible, one cannot dismiss their presence in a written or visual text as mere superficiality, discrete and capable of being

cauterised from the rest of the text. At the very least, *japonaiserie*, associated with the superficial and the separable, and *japonisme*, associated with connoisseurship and the considered assimilation of another aesthetic, need to be situated on a sliding scale rather than as irreconcilably antithetical. It follows from this troubling of the *japonaiserie/japonisme* opposition that this study also rejects the application of the *japonaiserie* label to *The Mikado*. Lee is just one of a number of scholars who term the opera “an example of what is often called *japonaiserie*,” with its connotations of a “lack of authenticity.”²⁹ In reading the opera as a text that both uses Japanese art objects for decorative effect and incorporates some of the techniques by which such objects were produced, this chapter defines *The Mikado* as neither superficial *japonaiserie* nor highbrow *japonisme*.

But beyond art-historical distinctions and questions of the status of the object, this chapter is, above all, concerned with defining Englishness, particularly in its late-Victorian moment, in transcultural terms. There is a sense in which this study is wholly of a piece with *Mikado* critical orthodoxy, in which its central argument is that the opera *is* quintessentially English. What is problematic about the orthodox stance on *The Mikado*—as expressed most notably by Chesterton—is not so much its emphasis on the Englishness of the text as its myopically restrictive definition of such a quality, its sense of English culture as fixed, ossified and resistant to new ideas and artefacts. Surely the

transcultural appropriation of outside influences and the creation of ethnic stereotypes were as much facets of Victorian culture as burlesques and pantomimes. The “Japan craze” that motivated *The Mikado* and made it profitable should not be read as an anomalous phenomenon. Rather, it is indicative of the restless syncretism, the unavoidable transculturality of late-Victorian England. That “craze” was preceded not by English cultural purity but by similarly acquisitive phenomena such as the Chinoiserie of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.³⁰ Both the “Japan craze” and Chinoiserie present us with instances in which the consumption of foreign commodities in particular underwrites the domestication of the foreign, brings it into English discursive and domestic spaces.³¹

In this chapter, I begin with a fuller description of the ukiyo-e art-form and its entry into the European art world. I then consider the ways in which both ukiyo-e and *The Mikado* present worlds defined by detached theatricality, a stance that produces in the opera a critique of both ostensibly Japanese and ostensibly English cultural forms alike. In both ukiyo-e and *The Mikado*, this detached theatricality also involves a self-conscious highlighting of artifice. The chapter’s second section therefore considers the two art-forms’ congruent relationships to realism. This congruence is attributable both to cultural contact between Japan and Western countries and, it would appear, to coincidence, to

parallel rather than entangled modernities. In this regard, the chapter presents an expansion of our central concept of Japanglia; whereas the previous chapter stressed imbrication as a result of contact—in the form of international exhibitions, linguistic overlap, and the like—this chapter additionally includes, under the rubric of Japanglia, overlaps or commonalities that appear to be coincidental. In the chapter's third section, I consider the way parallel modernities of middle-class commodity culture define the contexts for both ukiyo-e and *The Mikado*. Both art-forms, I argue, function as nodal points in endless networks of desire generation. In the concluding section, I return to the question of critical reception, presenting a range of factors that may account for the mutual failure to recognise the syncretic origins of both ukiyo-e and *The Mikado*. In ending the chapter, I consider the one aspect of the opera widely considered to be Japanese—the song “Miya Sama.” I find that, just as many aspects of the opera commonly defined as English are more Japanese than widely recognised, “Miya Sama” is conversely more English than commonly thought.

I

“Us” Performing “Them”

Opening their copies of the libretto for the first time as the curtains rose, attendees of the Savoy Theatre's 1885 premiere of *The Mikado* encountered the

“[c]ourtyard of Ko-Ko’s palace in Titipu” (I.1). There, “Japanese nobles [were] discovered standing and sitting in attitudes suggested by native drawings” (I.1-2). The courtyard provided the setting for the opera’s opening song, in which a “chorus of nobles” addressed the audience directly:

If you want to know who we are,
 We are gentleman of Japan:
 On many a vase and jar—
 On many a screen and fan,
 We figure in lively paint.

(I.3-7)

Both the description of the staging and the opening lines of the nobles’ chorus establish Japanese objects as the primary point of visual reference for the opera, at least upon initial consideration. And yet, a closer reading of these lines suggests a more complex relationship between the opera and art objects such as “native drawings,” “vase[s] and jar[s],” “screen[s] and fan[s],” than that of mere aesthetic guidance. To be sure, the staging cues present us with a simple case of simile: the nobles are “discovered ... in attitudes suggested by native drawings” (my emphasis). But “If You Want to Know Who We Are” pushes the relationship beyond appears to be metaphor; rather than being something like the figures on

Japanese art objects, the nobles *are* such figures. And if the nobles are the figures on an art object, *The Mikado*, the equation implies, is itself a (putatively) Japanese art object. Instead of merely borrowing visual motifs from the designs found on such objects, then, the opera constructs a far more thoroughgoing reproduction of the world of the Japanese art object—a reproduction of the “floating world” that both shaped and was depicted in late-Edo and early-Meiji art.

So what were the defining features of the floating world and ukiyo-e, its most recognizable art form? Art historians commonly trace the origins of ukiyo-e back to the early seventeenth century, when Kyoto and Edo (now Tokyo) both saw the development of a new, literate class of urban merchants and artists. The latter would produce a new genre of visual art that would take as its dominant subject the everyday city life of the merchant class.³² While ukiyo-e are primarily known in their print form today, they were also appreciated as paintings, as illustrations for books, as kimono fabric pattern catalogues, and as other forms of advertising, such as for kabuki productions.³³ In the eighteenth century, the dominant subject for ukiyo-e would be the denizens of Edo’s Yoshiwara pleasure quarters and the city’s kabuki theatres, sites that David Bell notes “might today be described as an ‘underworld,’ a distinct subculture of literary, social and sensual entertainments known as ‘*ukiyo*,’ the ‘floating world.’”³⁴ The mid-eighteenth century would see two key developments in the evolution of the art

form. New printing technologies would allow for the production of full colour prints, which were “more refined” and involved the more “careful delineat[ion]” of portait subjects’ features than had been the case with monochrome prints.³⁵ Around the same time, the importation into Japan of European technologies such as the *vue d’optique* allowed ukiyo-e artists to study and incorporate techniques of Western realism in ways hitherto impossible.³⁶ Ukiyo-e were as shaped by government restriction as they were by trade expansion, however; the Togugawa Shogunate’s Tenpō Reforms of 1842–43 involved a crackdown on public morality that curtailed the production of images of the urban demimonde and conversely encouraged the already-nascent switch in focus to images of nature.³⁷

It is from this period, the early nineteenth century, that the ukiyo-e images best known in the West emerge—pictures such as Katsushika Hokusai’s series *Thirty-Six Views of Mount Fuji* (富嶽三十六景 [fugaku sanjūrokkei] and Andō Hiroshige’s series *The Fifty-Three Stations of the Tōkaidō* (東海道五十三次 [tōkaidōgojūsantsugi]). With their already-Westernised compositional techniques and perspectivalism, ukiyo-e would be enthusiastically received by Western visual artists of the mid to late nineteenth century. Figures such as Vincent van Gogh and James McNeill Whistler—the latter a friend of Sullivan’s—would draw on (what they perceived as) the anti-realism of ukiyo-e as an alternative to artistic illusionism, which was widely viewed to have had its day.³⁸ The new

Japanese inspiration was not a matter of purely esoteric interest, either. By the time *The Mikado* premiered, the English public had already been witness to the 1878 libel trial in which Whistler sued John Ruskin for the critic's characterisation of the artist's ukiyo-e-inspired *Nocturne in Black and Gold: The Falling Rocket* (c. 1872–77) as the "flinging [of] a pot of paint in the public's face."³⁹ Ukiyo-e had entered the London art world.

We should not be surprised by the tightness of the connection between visual art and *The Mikado*. In the first place, as Anna Jackson notes, the Victorian period "was a time when a people's character was said to be reflected in the art they produced."⁴⁰ Where better to look for Japanese characteristics than ukiyo-e? Second, for nineteenth-century European dramatists, painting provided not merely inspiration for the aesthetics of a production but also, potentially, plot content. Most significantly for our purposes, Chiba writes of Frenchman Zacharie Astruc's *L'Ile de le Demoiselle* (1863), "the first known play based directly on color prints."⁴¹ Gilbert and Sullivan's opera might thus be read as part of a transnational theatrical tradition in its use of the prints for inspiration. And *The Mikado* would inspire further dramatisations of ukiyo-e, most famously that offered by the dancer Sada Yacco, whose early-twentieth-century performances would register for Max Beerbohm as "'the realisation that the colour-prints wove for us."⁴² On a deeper level, Michael Booth writes that "look[ing] at the stage as

if it were picture was by 1850 an automatic response in audiences,” adding that “mak[ing] performance resemble painting was a habit of managers and technical staff.”⁴³ To connect *The Mikado* with ukiyo-e is hardly contentious when considered in this context.

But how, specifically, does *The Mikado* appear to use ukiyo-e as a model? It seems almost too obvious to say that both ukiyo-e and *The Mikado* take actors as their main figures. Chiba notes that ukiyo-e artists’ favourite subjects were “actors, dancers, and geisha in places of entertainment.”⁴⁴ With this choice of subjects came a concomitant emphasis on both gesture and posture.⁴⁵ To say that *The Mikado* also presents a world of dramatic performance is not a tautological claim, not mere confirmation that this, after all, is a work of theatre. Rather, it alludes to the fact that the opera’s central characters are defined from the outset not as unitary subjects but as protean performers. Their initial appearances in the text thus read more like dramatic curriculum vitae than self-introductions. This is particularly apparent in the case of Nanki-Poo. Masquerading as a “wandering minstrel” in order to hide his identity as the son of the Mikado, the figure of Nanki-Poo presents us with a double-layered performance—an actor (Durward Lely in the original 1885 production) playing a man (the Mikado’s son) playing another performer (the travelling balladeer). His self-description contains no

reference to personal characteristics. Instead, we are guided through the options on a "catalogue" "through every passion ranging" (I.29 and I.30). Embedded in this menu are implicit citations of scripts to be selected depending on the desires of the minstrel's audience: "Oh, sorrow, sorrow." The song thus alternates between commentary on available songs and songs within the song. Moreover, the initial lines of "A Wandering Minstrel I" suggest that there is no stepping back beyond this commentary, no recourse to a non-performing, essential subject. Nanki-Poo is a "thing of shreds and patches, / Of ballads, songs and snatches, / And dreamy lullaby" (I.26-8). Comprised entirely of performance, Nanki-Poo has no existence outside of his repertoire.

In addition to these scenes of explicitly staged performance, other characters offer constative support for the notion of Titipu as a world of dramatic artifice. Ko-Ko describes his career advancement as the result of "long and weary dances" (I. 226). In a more extended utterance, commonly termed "My Object All Sublime," the Mikado himself outlines a Titipuvian legal code in which offences, rewards, and punishments all revolve around performance. By way of offenders, the monarch offers a series of examples of different kinds of incompetent performers: those who fail to entertain in the form of "[a]ll prosy dull society sinners, / Who chatter and bleat and bore" (II.345-6), the unconvincing performer as embodied by the "lady who dyes a chemical yellow / Or stains her grey hair

puce" (II.355-6), and the untalented "amateur tenor, whose vocal villainies / All desire to shirk" (II.350-1). As is the case with offences, punishments also constitute different kinds of performance, most notably the passive, unwilling performance in which "[e]ach evil liver" becomes "[a] running river / Of harmless merriment" (II.334-6) and performance without an audience, "[i]n a dungeon cell" (II.380). Equally serious is the threat of complete tooth extraction, a measure that prevents the loquacious "advertising quack" from giving any further performance whatsoever (II.367). Unsurprisingly, the ostensible execution of Nanki-Poo—yet another performance in the form of a tall tale told by Pooh-Bah, Ko-Ko, and Pitti-Sing—becomes, according to Ko-Ko, "a remarkable scene" (II.404), which the Mikado surmises was witnessed by a "[v]ery good house" (II.402). In this latter example, the language of stage prompts or alternatively theatrical criticism begins to infiltrate the opera's dialogue. The opera thus offers numerous instances in which the world of Titipu, much like that of ukiyo-e, is defined by exchanges of performances. And perhaps this connection is, like that between the visual arts and theatre, somewhat unsurprising; as Chiba observes, ukiyo-e's focus on the world of performers made it "a perfect match for the mood of fin-de-siècle Europe."⁴⁶

Those parts of the libretto in which characters present their dramatic curriculum vitae are also congruent with ukiyo-e in that they include both

movement and stasis. Bell describes a “sense of acute tension or stillness” in ukiyo-e.⁴⁷ Along somewhat different lines, Chiba writes of Oscar Wilde’s *Picture of Dorian Gray* (1890), with its description of just such a tension in its opening pages, as “one of the few serious English novels that make an evocative use of the Japanese artistic principles.”⁴⁸ But we might read *The Mikado* as a precursor to Wilde’s novel, albeit in terms of plot advancement. Joseph Litvak writes that “theatrical energies” can thwart narrative progression.⁴⁹ This certainly appears to be the case in *The Mikado*. On the one hand, these presentations of theatrical repertoires are defined by a dizzyingly rapid movement between citations of different roles. In “A Wandering Minstrel I,” for example, Nanki-Poo variously offers a love song (I.36), a “patriotic ballad” (I.45), and a “song of the sea” (I.53) in little more than thirty lines. Similarly, in offering opinions from the perspectives of his various official positions while in conversation with Nanki-Poo, Pooh-Bah moves through eleven roles in a similar number of lines (I.279-309). In presenting his menu of possible performances, Pooh-Bah volunteers that “I go and dine with middle-class people on reasonable terms. I dance at cheap suburban parties for a moderate fee. I accept refreshment at any hands, however lowly. I also retail State secrets at a very low figure” (I.160-3). But as this quotation suggests particularly strikingly, that rapid movement is counterbalanced by a more subtle stasis. The repeated use of simple sentences lacking all but the briefest of dependent clauses and all beginning with the same

pronoun conveys not only a breathlessness surrounding Pooh-Bah's activities but also a sameness to them.

In other displays of theatricality in the text, plot movement is also arrested. Rather than sameness, however, the reader encounters perpetual erasure. That is to say, in both Nanki-Poo's and Pooh-Bah's descriptions of their various roles, the presentation of each successive role erases that of the last. In the scene in which he advises Ko-Ko on the matter of wedding festivities, Pooh-Bah utters a series of clauses, few sentences being allowed to stand without being erased by what follows:

POOH. Oh, as your Solicitor, I should no hesitation in saying
'Chance it—'

KO. Thank you. (*Shaking his hand.*) I will.

POOH. If it were not that, as Lord Chief Justice, I am bound to see
that the law isn't violated.

KO. ... Now, then, as First Lord of the Treasury?

POOH. Of course, as First Lord of the Treasury, I could propose a
special vote that would cover all expenses, if it were not that, as
Leader of the Opposition, it would be my duty to resist it, tooth
and nail. Or, as Paymaster-General, I could so cook the accounts

that, as Lord High Auditor, I should never discover the fraud. But then, as Archbishop of Titipu, it would be my duty to denounce my dishonesty and give myself into my own custody as First Commissioner of Police.

(I. 296-309)

Sentences thus begin with conjunctions such as “or” and “but then.” Conditional phrases such as “if it were not that” and “[or] ... I could” nullify previous possibilities without conclusively leaving anything else in place. Finally, even if only one role were being suggested by the character concerned, that role would remain only tentative. In the first place, it would be abstracted from the interactions between characters that advance the unfolding of the plot as it would ultimately still be a self-contained performance within the larger performance. Second, the execution of such a role would only take place subject to the whims of an abstracted third party. For instance, in the case of Nanki-Poo’s repertoire, the initiation of a performance would hinge on the question of whether “patriotic sentiment is wanted” (I.44) or whether “you [the abstract addressee] are in sentimental mood” (I.33). Some of the opera’s scenes of most explicit performativity are thus congruent with ukiyo-e in their tension between movement and stasis.

These moments of explicit performativity also exhibit yet another hallmark of the ukiyo-e genre: a stance of detachment. In this regard, David Bell emphasises the “urbanity” of ukiyo-e, a characteristic that “informed a degree of cool, unmoved detachment,” of “urbane resignation.”⁵⁰ In the case of *The Mikado*, each character stands at a distance from both a stable subjectivity and the emotions that come with subjectivity. Such detachment is most persistently generated by the libretto’s use of understatement. Ko-Ko’s description of his ascent to the rank of Lord High Executioner is significant in this regard:

Taken from the county jail
 By a set of curious chances;
 Liberated then on bail,
 On my own recognizances;
 Wafted by a favouring gale
 As one sometimes is in trances,
 To a height that few can scale,
 Save by long and weary dances;
 Surely never had a male
 Under such-like circumstances
 So adventurous a tale,
 Which may rank with most romances.

(I.219-230)

Here, the repeated use of passive verb phrases—"taken from," "liberated then," "wafted by"—and lack of nouns identifying agency build a sense of mystery regarding Ko-Ko's unlikely ascent. Indeed, the only active verb in the song—"surely never had a male"—refers to the ability to narrate the story of these unlikely events (my emphasis). The climactic point of the song is undercut by a final line of qualification, in which the conjectural "may" combines with the tentative "most"; ultimately, Ko-Ko's tale "may rank with most romances." Just as Ko-Ko's song suggests a distancing from the jubilation that one would expect to accompany a death-row reprieve, so too is Nanki-Poo's happy response to the news of a possible union with Yum-Yum diluted by understatement; his is only "modified rapture." Moments of unhappiness are similarly defined by detached understatement, Yum-Yum objecting to the possibility of burial alive with the somewhat gentle "it's such a stuffy death" (II.176). The figures depicted in ukiyo-e and Gilbert and Sullivan's characters thus share a stance of world-weary detachment. Bell defines such detachment as a facet of late-nineteenth-century Decadence. Given the long-acknowledged influence of Japanese art on Aestheticism/Decadence in both its British and Continental guises, the presence of such a quality in ukiyo-e is hardly surprising. It may, however, be more surprising to encounter Decadent detachment in the work of Gilbert and

Sullivan, one of whose most successful collaborations—*Patience* (1881)—had primarily and explicitly satirized the Aesthetic movement.

But detachment also needs to be considered in terms of the peculiar racial indeterminacy of the text. For the opera's understatement is employed without regard to the racial identity of its targets. It is at this point that we must return to Nanki-Poo's introductory song ("A Wandering Minstrel I"). Ranging through his various musical offerings, Nanki-Poo ventures that

if patriotic sentiment is wanted,
I've patriotic ballads cut and dried;
For where'er our country's banner may be planted,
All other local banners are defied!
Our warriors, in serried ranks assembled,
Never quail—or they conceal it if they do—
And I shouldn't be surprised if nations trembled
Before the mighty troops of Titipu!

(I.44-51)

At first glance, the lines read as an ironic undercutting of Japanese patriotism. The lines combine qualification in the form of an admission that Titipu's troops

“conceal it if they do [quail]” and non-committal credulity in the admission that “I shouldn’t be surprised if nations trembled.” The implicit disjuncture between such ambivalence on the one hand and the reader’s expectations of certainty in patriotic ballads (partially fulfilled by the major-key orchestration composed by Sullivan for these bars), belittles Japanese claims of military might. But this is only half of the picture. For if the content of the ballad is putatively Japanese, its form is most decidedly English. And it is, ultimately, impossible to separate the two. In using understatement here, the text undercuts both the notion of Japanese military might and the seriousness of English patriotism as instantiated in the military march. As I shall argue at greater length with regard to Rudyard Kipling, the Victorian author frequently exceeds his/her aims in attempting to hold perceived Japanese elements at a distance, evoking a sense of distance from Englishness in the bargain. In this context, the description of the Japanese presence in the opera as mere window dressing starts to appear somewhat myopic; the opera’s satire is clearly Japanglian in its targets. Gilbert and Sullivan were thus unable to draw clear distinctions between both Aestheticism and its critics in the one instance, and Japanese and English cultural forms in another. It is, of course, in this sense of cultural blurring that ukiyo-e needs to be read as most closely symbolic of the opera’s treatment of race.

Following J. S. Bratton's assertion that theatre pivots around a distinction between "us" and "them," we might read *The Mikado* as a piece of theatre in which such a distinction collapses, pushing those usually identified as "us" into the category of "them."⁵¹ In this light, the opera's frequent breaching of the fourth wall—one of its most distinctive features—takes on a new and anxious significance. For in most cases, these moments of metafictional self-consciousness are more accurately described as instances of racial consciousness. Ko-Ko's triumphant declaration that he's "found a volunteer" (I.691) to go to the gallows for him is met with the collectively uttered "[t]he Japanese equivalent for Hear, Hear, Hear'" (I.692). The response works to reinforce the strangeness of Japanese cultural elements (in this case, the Japanese language) by presenting such elements as absent presences, no more than placeholders. Ko-Ko's explanation for his supposed execution of Nanki-Poo operates in a similar fashion vis-à-vis Japaneseness. The "cheap tailor" excuses his failure to recognise the prince with the disclaimer that his name "might have been on his pocket handkerchief, but Japanese don't use pocket handkerchiefs!" (II.522-3). Once again, Japaneseness is defined by reference to an absence, and an absence only apparent in relation to the English language or to Englishness.

Some of these breaches are also defined by the use of a quasi-academic register. Yum-Yum cautions Nanki-Poo that "[y]ou forget that in Japan girls do

not arrive at years of discretion until they are fifty" (I.467-8), to which Nanki-Poo responds that "seventeen to forty-nine are considered years of discretion" (I.469-70). Here, the use of the passive voice results in an exchange that reads more like an academic monograph penned by a foreigner than the everyday exchange of youth. Ko-Ko's request for an "abject grovel in a characteristic Japanese attitude" similarly places the character in a position of putatively academic removal from Japaneseness, the academic field resembling art history more than anthropology as appeared to be the case in the previous instance (I.315-6). Fourth wall breaches might thus be read as anxious attempts to shore up the separation between familiar Englishness and strange Japaneseness. Finally, should the reader be in any doubt as to the need for such reassurance, a passing comment from the critic for the *Pall Mall Gazette* may settle the matter. The critic notes that Mr. Mitford, the source of Gilbert's main textual guide for the opera, was so struck by the "verisimilitude of the production" that he "declared that when he found himself surrounded by these gentlemen [the Savoy players in Japanese garb] he felt instinctively for his revolver."⁵²

In addition to emphasising distance from Japaneseness, these breaches of the fourth wall work to forge a rapport between English performers and their presumably English audience. Such a rapport is most persistently suggested via the use of the second-person address. Indeed, the opera's opening lines take the

form of an apostrophe, with the nobles' declaration that "[i]f you want to know who we are, / We are gentlemen of Japan," and the disclaimer that "[o]ur attitude's queer and quaint—/ You're wrong if you think it ain't ..." These lines serve a dual purpose, simultaneously staging the nobles' song as a conversation between characters and audience and immediately establishing Japanese aesthetics and mannerisms as objects implicitly requiring explanation. This use of the second-person is pursued to its extreme later in Act I, when Pish-Tush and the chorus comment upon the Mikado's anti-flirting laws. Pish-Tush ventures that

.....I expect you'll all agree
 That he was right to so decree
 And I am right,
 And you are right,
 And all is right as right can be.

(I. 95-9)

In echoing that "you are right / And we are right," the chorus engages in the construction of a community of joyful and mutually reinforcing sophistry. Together with the word "right," the pronouns "you," "I," and "he" are uttered with such frequency—and at such a tempo—as to suggest a blending of the three

elements in the exchange. Finally, we might divine a similar drive to highlight Japanese strangeness and forge a cultural unity among English subjects in those reviews of the opera that seek to unmask the off-stage (English) reality behind the players' Japanese garb.⁵³ In both the libretto and its reception, then, one encounters a need to hold ostensibly Japanese racial identity at a distance while staging English community. "Us" must be allied against "them."

II

Japanglian Realism

Perhaps perversely, the libretto's tendency to tear the Japanese masks from its performers constitutes an additional point of congruence with the ukiyo-e genre. It is at this point that I wish to consider the respective stances vis-à-vis realism suggested by *The Mikado* and ukiyo-e. Both *The Mikado* and ukiyo-e draw attention to their own artifice, to their materiality as performance and painting respectively. Bell explains that the "consistent adoption of shallow-space compositional modes" by ukiyo-e artists "focused the viewer's attention on the complex interaction of marks, lines, shapes and patterns across, or up and down, the picture plane."⁵⁴ The increasing sense of Japan as a zone of pure artifice is partially attributable to the emphasis on artifice in ukiyo-e. With this in mind, we might examine the opera's breaches of the fourth wall in terms of the text's

complex relationship to realism. For such breaches draw explicit attention not only to the non-Japanese racial identity of the performers but also to the projected reality of audience members' collective experience, the fact that they are attending an opera produced by the D'Oyly Carte Company at the Savoy Theatre in 1885. In response to his question about the whereabouts of Nanki-Poo, the Mikado is thus informed that his son has gone to Knightsbridge, a reference to the contemporaneous Japanese Village exhibition that was being staged in that part of London (II.499). In less explicit terms, the Mikado provides ironic recognition of the audience's collective experience when he tells those who had ostensibly brought about Nanki-Poo's execution that "I'm really very sorry for you all, but it's an unjust world, and virtue is triumphant only in theatrical performances" (II.557-8). In paradoxically highlighting the actuality of its own artificiality, the libretto evinces a commitment to an admittedly attenuated form of realism; the text does not purport to hold a mirror to reality—as is conventionally the case in realist texts—so much as to the truth of its own *unreality*. In this regard, we might once again compare *The Mikado* with the work of the avowedly Aesthetic Oscar Wilde. As Nina Auerbach writes, Wilde's work simultaneously celebrates theatricality and gestures toward a notion of authenticity.⁵⁵ As is the case with the opera's emphasis on detachment, then, it would appear that Gilbert and Sullivan share more with the Aesthetic movement than their satire in *Patience* would suggest.

In addition to gesturing toward a single, common reality through the highlighting of artificiality, the text also appears to tip its hand in favour of a notion of authentic, unfragmented subjectivity. Along these lines, Auerbach adds that writers such as Wilde may have harkened after an authentic subjectivity partly as a response to the “spiritual danger,” the loss of self threatened by theatricality.⁵⁶ This gesturing toward authenticity—and concomitant discomfort vis-à-vis performance—is apparent in the opera’s unfavourable presentation of its more obviously theatrical characters on the one hand, and its contrasting presentation of the anti-theatrical Katisha, on the other. Let us consider the former first. Ko-Ko, Titipu’s Lord High Executioner, initially asserts his capacity for decisive action, remarking that “I am happy to think that there will be no difficulty in finding plenty of people whose loss will be a distinct gain to society at large” (I.237-8). One should note, however, that this assertion relates to his ability to select someone for execution and not to the execution itself. The former is ultimately an intellectual exercise, while the latter involves the application of force. The difference between the two is subsequently revealed when Ko-Ko protests that he “can’t kill anything ... [or] anybody” upon being called to act (II.248-9). In this sense, Ko-Ko reveals a capacity for acting but an incapacity for taking action. His proposed solution to the problem deploys language as a tool for the maintenance of artifice—or, put another way, the continuation of

performance—with its logic that “an affidavit that you [Nanki-Poo] have been executed will do just as well” as a literal execution (II.255-6). Nanki-Poo also seeks to enlist language as a tool for the maintenance of artifice when he attempts to sugarcoat the reality of his imminent execution. “We’ll call each second a minute—each minute an hour—each hour a day—and each day a year” (II.90-1), he tells Yum-Yum, adding that “[a]t any rate we’ve about thirty years of married happiness before us!” (II.91-2). Here, signifiers, which are assumed to determine signifieds, become mere options on a menu, with the result that lived reality becomes entirely negotiable depending on the subject’s linguistic choices.

Katisha—the text’s anti-actor—acts as a foil to these overtly theatrical characters. Her arrival comes with the presentation of neither a dramatic curriculum vitae (as in the case of Pooh-Bah and Nanki-Poo) nor an implicit statement regarding the desirability of performance (as in the case of the Mikado). In place of the malleable temporality offered by Nanki-Poo, Katisha laments time’s cruelty, its withholding of the consolations of transience. “Come, tell me why,” she demands of herself, “[w]hen hope is gone, / Dost thou stay on?” (II.672-4).⁵⁷ Ultimately, she wonders, “[m]ay not a cheated maiden die?” (II.681). Unlike Nanki-Poo and Pooh-Bah, then, Katisha experiences subjectivity as all too immutable. Consistent with this emphasis on the certain and immutable is Katisha’s use of absolute terms. In place of the other characters’

understatement, we hear of “delights that never cloy” (I.742) and “love, which never dies” (I.806) even when “all else has perished” (I.807). In contrast, both Ko-Ko and Yum-Yum quickly forget their betrothed when faced with the possibility that such an alliance might be fatal, the former telling Nanki-Poo to “take Yum-Yum and marry Yum-Yum, only go away and never come back again,” as it might allow him to avoid execution (II.272-3). Finally, Katisha presents relationships as experiences of long-term learning, surely the antithesis of the short-term performance offered by the other characters. Lamenting Nanki-Poo’s flight from her, she remarks that “I was educating his palate when he left me,” conceding that “[h]e did not love me, but he would have loved me in time” (II.688-9 and 687). In numerous respects, Katisha is positioned as the antithesis of Titipu’s ostensibly prevailing theatricality.

I use the term “ostensibly” here because, for all of its seeming power, such valorisation of protean, performative subjectivity is ultimately undone by Katisha’s arrival. Indeed, the advancement of the text’s plot in the second and final act is tied almost entirely to Katisha’s desires. Her power is registered syntactically in her repeated interjections in what begins as the Mikado’s solo, “From Every Kind of Man Obedience I Expect.” The monarch’s assertion that his “morals have been declared / Particularly correct” (II.304-5) is met with the assertion that “they’re nothing at all, compared / With those of his daughter-in-

law elect" (II.306-7). In an even more striking display of her hold over events in Titipu, Katisha exempts herself from the Mikado's claims that "I govern each tribe and sect" and that "all cheerfully own my sway" (II.313 and 314) with the rejoinder "[e]xcept his daughter-in-law elect!" (II.315). Moreover, Nanki-Poo cannot return to the Court without appeasing Katisha, while Ko-Ko must obtain her hand in marriage if he is to save himself from execution. One might argue that Ko-Ko's successful use of performance (in the form of the false sentiment of "Tit Willow") in order to woo Katisha suggests that the world of Titipu still ultimately revolves around the simulation of sentiments. But it should be acknowledged that Ko-Ko is still compelled to act (in both senses of the word) by Katisha's sincere wishes. Ultimately, then, the action of *The Mikado* turns upon the desires of its least theatrical character, its only anti-performative refusenik. The text thus presents a world in which joyful performance can only take one so far before the force of an immutable, unitary subjectivity wins out. In this regard, *The Mikado* enacts a subtly realist agenda.

This is not the end of the matter, however. Indeed, both ukiyo-e and *The Mikado* adopt similarly complex stances vis-à-vis artistic realism. Both art forms seem to be at once obviously anti-realist and subtly tending toward visual verisimilitude. Even given the foregoing argument regarding the power of the anti-performative Katisha, it still seems almost too obvious to describe *The*

Mikado as profoundly anti-realist. Its sudden changes in identity and use of disguise—Nanki-Poo masquerading as “a Second Trombone”—hark back to the unarguably non-realist English pantomime tradition.⁵⁸ Moreover, Pooh-Bah’s occupation of multiple, conflicting official roles is satirical but far from plausible, while Katisha’s possession of a “left shoulder-blade that is a miracle of loveliness” (II.482) would appear to gesture toward the grotesque, one of the non-realist hallmarks of ukiyo-e.⁵⁹ Victorian critics were quick to draw attention to the fanciful nature of these plot elements, describing the storyline as variously “thin” and “extremely slight.”⁶⁰ For some critics, the anti-realist elements of the production were attributable to the latitude provided by its putatively Japanese setting. “A Japanese damsel may,” the critic for *The Academy* asserted, “with utmost merriment, receive affectionate attention from a gentleman who is doomed to be beheaded in a month ...”⁶¹

But in focusing on these fantastical elements in the text, we are only partially defining the opera’s relationship to realism. This was a period in which many practitioners of English theatre were, perhaps in keeping with their drive toward middle-class respectability, making concerted efforts toward realism.⁶² Although Gilbert might have eschewed such a goal in devising his plots, he was an enthusiastic practitioner of a relatively thoroughgoing form of visual verisimilitude in his use of props, costumes, and gestures, historical liberties not

withstanding. The kimono worn by Rosina Brandram, who played Katisha in the original production, was more than two hundred years old, while the masks worn by the Mikado's banner bearers were apparently "precise copies of those which used to adorn the Mikado's bodyguard."⁶³ This is not to mention the extensive consultation regarding mannerisms provided by the employees of the Japanese Village exhibition. Although she is writing about multiple different *Mikado* incarnations, it is worth drawing attention to Lee's observation that *Mikado* productions both "exhibited a marked casualness about their representational power" and put "a certain realism ... at a premium, suggesting a certain kind of anxiety about the 'authentic' that could not be so easily put off."⁶⁴ With this dichotomy of ostensibly anti-realist plotting and realist "propping" in mind, we might situate *The Mikado* at a midpoint between realism and its inverse.

That practitioners of ukiyo-e should also position their work ambivalently with regard to realism, that their images should embody "a sense of tension between artifice and naturalism," is no coincidence.⁶⁵ The genre was heavily influenced by Western visual art, chiefly in its use of Cartesian perspectivalism.⁶⁶ In the most concrete sense, the origins of ukiyo-e lie in the mid eighteenth century, when Japanese merchants began to import *vues d'optique* from Holland, which was then Japan's only direct Western trading partner.⁶⁷ These devices—

which provided the only means by which Japanese artists could view example of Western art—were fairly crude in their reproduction of images, “simplify[ing] and exaggerate[ing] perspective.”⁶⁸ As Sakamoto notes, “[t]hey were simply playthings, lacking accuracy in form or colouring and having no delicate details nor correct balance.”⁶⁹ And yet it was precisely this simplification of the images allowed them to be more readily emulated.⁷⁰ That ukiyo-e were initially viewed as anti-realist by Western artists while they were considered emulations of Western realist technique by their Japanese practitioners is partly explained, then, by this quirk of imaging technology. A persistent view of the Japanese as irrational, or at least antithetical in their modes of perception, and therefore non-realist in their art is, of course, is equally pertinent. Such a view, of course, fails to recognise the degree of artistic convergence that would allow for Asian art such as ukiyo-e to serve as inspiration for Western artists, such as Gilbert and Sullivan.⁷¹

In its largest context, the development of this peculiarly Japanglian art-form, particularly in its realist elements, also needs to be viewed as part of a much larger phenomenon—the adoption of Western knowledge in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Japan. This process involved an “intensive effort ... to master Western technology,” an effort that required the assimilation of Western knowledge in the natural sciences.⁷² As Yamada Chisaburō explains, “the study

of natural sciences led to a new way of looking at things based on the outlook of the modern world since the Renaissance."⁷³ In their landscapes in particular, ukiyo-e artists increasingly made use of what Pollack terms "Western techniques of shading and coloration (*chiaroscuro*, Prussian blue) and perspective."⁷⁴ In this regard, ukiyo-e is a distinctly Japanglian visual art form. It is this combination of Western and Japanese artistic techniques that made ukiyo-e a readily adoptable inspiration for Western artists such as James McNeil Whistler.⁷⁵

Ukiyo-e were additionally moving toward visual verisimilitude in other ways that seem to have been unrelated to Western influence. Here, that second, coincidence-based form of Japanglian phenomenon enters our study. As the art form developed, artists increasingly sought to make their human subjects—early modern kabuki and courtesan celebrities—as well as their landscapes identifiable to the local viewer as familiar people and places. Bell describes a "text-book, almost diagrammatic accuracy" in the representation of these "recognizable and reasonably convincing settings" and also notes the "recognizably individual appearance of [ukiyo-e artists'] various subjects."⁷⁶ The drive toward realism in ukiyo-e thus presents us with two forms of Japanglian phenomena, one a contact-based similarity, the other coincidental (a distinction that I shall discuss at greater length in the next chapter). What makes ukiyo-e Japanglian rather than simply putatively Western is its partial adoption of realist techniques. Most

obviously, artists who incorporated the Cartesian notion of the vanishing point into their work frequently included more than one vanishing point in a single picture, as if reaching a compromise between Western realism and traditional Japanese painting techniques in which distance was suggested by stacking different objects vertically in scroll-like fashion. Similarly, ukiyo-e artists tended to maintain the typically Japanese high viewpoint in pictures, rather than adopting the lower Western viewpoint.⁷⁷ Realism and non-realism thus co-existed in ukiyo-e, just as in *The Mikado*.

While we might view both ukiyo-e and *The Mikado* as partially realist, there is an important sense in which both art-forms relate to realism in a much more complex manner. Specifically, both Victorian theatre (of which *The Mikado* is a prominent example) and this Japanglian form of visual art might be said to not so much incorporate realism only partially as to drive emphatically toward it and race right on past, heading for something paradoxically non-realist. In the case of ukiyo-e, one finds that the attempt to incorporate Cartesian perspectivalism could work to obliterate detail rather than illuminating it. Objects in the foreground of pictures were frequently depicted at such closeness as to blur their details, while the positioning of an object in the background was often signalled by its depiction as something so minute as to be similarly indistinct.⁷⁸ Distance was thus suggested in a highly exaggerated manner.

Moreover, in their emulation of the garish colours viewed through the *vues d'optique*, ukiyo-e artists were paradoxically exhibiting a strict fidelity to these distorted Western models.

Nineteenth-century theatre-goers witnessed a similar kind of fumbling toward realism. As Booth writes, the century saw the development of increasingly powerful forms of lighting that allowed for stronger illumination of a larger proportion of the stage, offering the viewer the promise of complete visual revelation. Indeed, for the Savoy's proprietors, the use of electric lighting was key selling point for productions. Advertisements for *The Mikado* typically boasted of a "theatre lighted entirely by electricity."⁷⁹ But in saturating the entire stage with light, these new technologies actually served to obliterate detail. Their harsh brightness rendered all characters, props, and backdrops available to the interpretation of meaning. With the house lights remaining on throughout the performance, "[e]ven when it became technologically possible to manipulate [their] ... level," audience members also became a part of this spectacle of oligoptic illumination.⁸⁰ Everything—and nothing—became visually significant. Even when objects could be seen clearly, lighting produced a problematic result in terms of realist goals. Booth notes that "[t]he more the reproductions of reality, such as curtains and furniture, clashed with flat surface painting and the absence of shadows ... the more unnatural was the result. Real furniture in place of

property furniture looked shabby and unreal when viewed from a distance never appropriate to ordinary domestic life.”⁸¹ Just as the ukiyo-e artists had focused so closely on foreground objects as to render their details indistinct, so too did the lighting technicians in the more prosperous Victorian theatres frustrate the process of visual discernment. In both *The Mikado* and ukiyo-e, then, realism is pursued with such vigour as to be bypassed, leaving the text in an unknown realm—not realist, but not anti-realist in any simple sense, either. Rather than being purely coincidental, then, the fact that both Victorian theatre and Japanese visual arts could be pursuing the practice of realism is partially attributable to the availability of Western visual art-forms in Japan.

III

Savoy Shopping, Kabuki Commodities

But why was it so important that the stage be so brightly illuminated? In considering this question, I wish to change tack slightly and consider the connections between the opera, ukiyo-e, and commodity culture. The first explanation for the use of bright lighting relates to the rise of the celebrity actor in this period. Savoy players were, by this point, well known to audiences. Lee notes that a key aspect of the opera’s appeal for Victorian theatregoers was the opportunity to see “their favorite Savoy performers ...”⁸² This celebrity allowed

performers to profit from activities such as product endorsements.⁸³ Bright lighting ostensibly allowed the theatre to both profit from and maintain the players' fame by making them more recognisable on stage.

In addition to actors, the stage was also populated by props—and increasingly elaborate props in the case of the Savoy operas. The importance of such objects provides a second explanation for the use of powerful lighting. It becomes apparent when one considers both the libretto and the larger context for the original production. With regard to the libretto, the object assumes the role of a vehicle for character description—classic commodity fetishism.⁸⁴ The initial self-description offered by the nobles is based on both the negation of one object (the “Japanese marionette”) as a source of description and the adoption of others (“vase and jar,” “screen and fan”). As Christopher Lindner writes in regard to the Victorian novel, “the commodity, as the prime organizer of the capitalist economic system, lent itself to nineteenth-century society as *its* prime organizer.”⁸⁵ The players' movements are additionally shaped in part by such artistic inspirations as the screen and more literal determinants in the form of the Japanese garb in which they are attired. In a chiasmatic move, the objects might even be said to attain the degree of animation that the characters lack. While the latter appear mechanistic, as if “worked by strings,” the paint with which they are depicted is “lively.”

That the libretto would attribute the characteristics of objects to subjects and vice versa is unsurprising in the context of new lighting developments; Booth notes that such developments allowed actors to be treated as stage props.⁸⁶ Writing of literary responses to related developments, Andrew Miller observes a “penetrating anxiety” regarding the perceived reduction of the “moral and social world ... to a warehouse of goods and commodities” in the mid-Victorian novel.⁸⁷ The tone of levity that pervades much of *The Mikado* suggests that such an anxiety might have abated by the late century. Indeed the use of powerful lighting such as was the boast of the Savoy may be connected with the advent of new modes of retail display. The potentially detail-obliterating lighting that characterised Savoy performances thus needs to be linked with the rise of late-century commodity culture.

The entrenchment of a racialised form of commodity fetishism is additionally registered in a number of reviews of the opera that praised the production for its authenticity.⁸⁸ The critic for the *Pall Mall Gazette* described the “air of artistic verisimilitude attained by the nobles and guards” as “remarkable.”⁸⁹ Here, the term “artistic verisimilitude” presents us with an ambiguity: does it refer to verisimilitude to an existing artistic ideal, or to verisimilitude of another kind that is executed artistically? In either case, the

notion of verisimilitude does not appear to correspond neatly with that of conventional realism, of the mirror to reality. Writing for *The Theatre*, William Beatty-Kingston was less ambiguous in his pronouncement that “[t]he dresses are gorgeous, correct, and so far picturesque that they glow” (my emphasis).⁹⁰ Most tellingly, the critic for *The Bristol Mercury and Daily Post* enthused that “[e]verything looks as solid and real as do the highly-finished models by which alone we most of us know what Japanese architecture and Japanese figures are like.”⁹¹ Authenticity is assumed to be fidelity to an object-defined notion of Japaneseness. Realism becomes verisimilitude to an existing (i.e. “real”) representation. Commodity fetishism thus redefines realism. At its logical extreme, such logic would allow the critic for *The Academy* to describe the three little maids as “more Japanese than the Japanese ... [t]heir sudden, angular picturesqueness outv[ying] that of the screen ...”⁹² If Japaneseness amounted to verisimilitude to an artistic ideal, it could theoretically be untethered from racial identity. Commodity racism could, paradoxically, appear to be de-racinated. It was *things* that mattered, hence the need for newer and brighter lighting technologies to reveal them. Savoy music director Francois Cellier would confirm this when he “commented that the direct inspiration for the opera did not come from direct observation of Japanese people,” but rather from that of Japanese *objets d’art*.⁹³

Commodification does not end at the stage exits; rather, the opera's treatment of purchasable objects needs to be read as one point in an endless network of manufactured desire. In her study of class and the Savoy operas, Regina B. Oost maps out such a network of desire generation, a network that included advertising in programmes and libretti (some of which was blended with more purely informational text) and on-stage product placement.⁹⁴ Such advertising pointed the reader both to products that were related to the production and places at which the props on stage could be purchased. These details would be included at points in the printed libretto at which the objects were featured most prominently on stage. Savoy opera programmes themselves became commodities as well, with those who had not attended the production still able to purchase the booklets in order to mark their status as members of the urban bourgeoisie. Those who did manage to attend performances were able to assess their own commodified appearances against those of their fellow bourgeoisie in the continually-lit theatre. In these respects, a trip to the Savoy was as much a shopping trip as a musical experience.⁹⁵

Many of the opera's earliest viewers implicitly recognised this connection between the production and consumer behaviour. Writing of the opera's costuming, the critic for the *Daily News* thus speculated that "[i]f the enthusiasms of the ladies among the audience may afford a token, sashes rising halfway from

the waist to the shoulders and tied in huge double bows ... may find a place ere long among the fashions of the day."⁹⁶ The *Pall Mall Gazette*'s writer similarly wondered if the "exercise of the fan ... [might not] become the craze of drawing rooms."⁹⁷ More subtly, critics clearly viewed the opera as itself a commodity, as evidenced by the extensive column space devoted to discussion of Gilbert and Sullivan's attempts to guard their intellectual property against American imitations. The opera was thus both a commodity itself and a nodal point in the creation of desire for other commodities.

The ukiyo-e, the opera's model for Japaneseness, was also part of a network of manufactured desire, in terms of both its content and its context. In this common commodity culture, we encounter yet another coincidental similarity in the formation of Japanese and Western modernities. In addition to depicting landscapes, ukiyo-e were commonly produced as advertisements, particularly in catalogues of kimono fabrics.⁹⁸ David Pollack defines "ukiyo-e [as] ... blatant advertising for ... just about anything that might be for sale in Edo."⁹⁹ Indeed, the form of the products being advertised also influenced the form of the art, with many ukiyo-e assuming the patterning commonly found on kimono fabrics.¹⁰⁰ Ukiyo-e were also used to sell sexual services, with courtesans being depicted with the crests of their brothels so that would-be clients would be able to locate them.¹⁰¹ Additionally, the kabuki productions frequently portrayed

in ukiyo-e were as saturated with product placement as anything offered by D'Oyly Carte, thus adding a second layer to the commercial content of the images.¹⁰² Perhaps most interestingly, the circumstances under which ukiyo-e first arrived in Europe constitute a Japanglian tangent point at which the circles of Western and Japanese commodity cultures touched. Often regarded as worthless in Japan, mass-produced paper ukiyo-e prints were frequently used as wrapping for Japanese decorative art objects being exported to Europe. D'Oyly Carte would triangulate commodity culture(s), ukiyo-e, and *The Mikado*, when he commissioned a souvenir programme for the opera to be produced in the style of ukiyo-e and sold at *Mikado* performances.¹⁰³

How are we to explain this similarity? Why is it that both a Victorian opera and a Japanese mode of painting with roots in the eighteenth century are situated so similarly with regard to the generation of consumer desire? Both Edo Japan and Victorian England are defined by an enormously significant social phenomenon: the development of, for want of a better term, an urban middle class. As Jenkins writes, "[u]rban life quickened and prosperity began to spread, resulting in the rise of a new, literate merchant class interested in art forms that appealed to its own tastes and experience."¹⁰⁴ It was the merchant class of the Edo metropolis that most frequented the kabuki performances depicted in ukiyo-e. It was also this class that was unlikely to be in a position to engage in

patronage relationships but still possessed the means to purchase decorative and visual art objects such as ukiyo-e. Victorian England was similarly the staging ground for the development of a new urban identity that was neither aristocratic nor labouring.¹⁰⁵ As Oost notes, Gilbert and Sullivan were implicitly appealing to people of this class in multiple ways—through choices in theatre architecture, programmes, advertising, libretti, costuming, and on and on—all of which were defined by an emphasis on respectability and other middle-class virtues.¹⁰⁶

And just as the floating world has commonly been viewed as a milieu defined by artifice, so too did Victorians increasingly reject an Englishness defined by industrial urbanism in favour of the “real” England perceived to exist in the countryside.¹⁰⁷ For W. S. Gilbert, the choice of Edo Japan as a setting for an opera that also satirised many aspects of urban English existence may thus have been particularly appropriate. Such a choice may also contribute to the confusion regarding the targets of the opera’s satire (discussed earlier with regard to Nanki-Poo’s “song of the sea”), to the untenability of distinguishing the Japanese vehicle for satire from its English target. Parallel developments in English and Japanese forms of modernity thus complicate our reading of the opera.

Finally, we might additionally attribute the parallel imperialisms advanced by Japan and England to the growth of their respective middle classes.

Simon Gikandi writes that the “age of empire was the period in which the rest of the world came to be written into the dominant European narrative, a narrative that defined itself in categories—modernity in bourgeois identity—which even the colonized came to admire and emulate.”¹⁰⁸ This was surely as true of the Japanese imperialism of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries as it was of European forms of expansionism.

IV

Refusing Syncretism?

Teasing out the connections between *The Mikado* and ukiyo-e, one finds similarities between English and Japanese forms of modernity that arise from both contact and coincidence. The development of urban networks of middle-class consumer desire as contexts for these art-forms in both Japan and England would appear to constitute a case of coincidence. On the other hand, the congruent, and equally problematic relations to realism encountered in the two art-forms are at least partially attributable to that other category of Japanglian phenomena, that of contact-based developments. And yet, as I made clear in the introduction to this chapter, despite the Japanglian nature of both the opera and

this genre of visual art, the reception for both art forms is defined by a lack of recognition of cultural syncretism. How are we to account for this myopia?

In the case of ukiyo-e, it may simply be the case that a lack of scholarly attention to the art-form made for many gaps in the understanding of ukiyo-e and its origins. This lack of scholarly attention may be read as a vestige of elite Meiji embarrassment regarding the international popularity of ukiyo-e, an art-form regarded by many as little more than advertising or illustration at best.¹⁰⁹ An additional explanation is historiographic: scholars of Japanese history have only recently come to revise assumptions regarding *sakoku*, the closed country policy, and specifically, to recognise the extent of international trade with Japan prior to Commodore Perry's arrival.¹¹⁰ This historiographic tendency may be a legacy of yet another factor, namely the increasingly nationalist self-enunciation of the Meiji and Taisho periods—a topic of extended discussion in the next chapter. Such rhetoric may have militated against the recognition of early cultural syncretism just as it made Westernised Meiji art and architecture a subject of critical derision.

In the case of *The Mikado*, just as with ukiyo-e, a lack of sustained scholarly attention may also be relevant.¹¹¹ There also appear to be more complex factors contributing to the move away from an initial sense of the opera's racially

ambiguous origins and toward a more strident insistence on pure and quintessential Englishness. To be sure, the libretto does include instances of explicit hostility toward other races. Ko-Ko includes “the nigger serenader, and others of his race” in his list of those who “never would be missed” (I.242 and 251). “The idiot who praises, with enthusiastic tone, / All centuries but this, and every country but his own” is also a target for criticism (I.255-6). Some critics may have confused these utterances of a character for statements of artistic methodology. David Cannadine thus writes of Gilbert and Sullivan’s “disdain for ‘abroad’ [and] ... their inability to take foreigners seriously.”¹¹² But there are larger factors at play in this myopic assessment of the opera. Krishan Kumar writes of a growing sense of cultural distinctiveness on the part of the English beginning in the late nineteenth century. With English dominance within both Great Britain and the wider world starting to appear less certain, the English, Kumar argues, at last began to develop the ethnic nationalism that had long ago appeared among the Scots and the Irish. The late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries thus constituted what Kumar terms a “moment of Englishness.”¹¹³ In this moment, even the most seemingly transnational traditions—most notably socialism—had to be presented as indigenous English phenomena.¹¹⁴ In the terminology I have hitherto employed, “Japanglia” would have to become simply “Anglia.” Such an impulse also sprang from a fear of cultural contamination, with the English language in particular believed to be under

threat from its contact with the colonies.¹¹⁵ Finally, the anxiety that occasioned the fin-de-siècle “moment of Englishness” ultimately spawned a sense of English culture as a fully formed entity forged in the distant past. As Dodd writes, “[t]he people of these islands with their diverse cultural identities were invited to take their place, and become spectators of a culture already complete and represented for them by its trustees.”¹¹⁶ It was surely this element of English self-definition that was most antithetical to the model of transculturality that I have outlined.

All of these factors go some way toward explaining the culturally purist responses to the opera advanced during the fin de siècle. But how are we to account for the persistent recourse to notions of quintessential Englishness in characterisations of *The Mikado* in our time? Two explanations present themselves here. First, we need to consider not only how *The Mikado* was an expression of Englishness but also how the Savoy operas more generally shaped notions of Englishness still invoked today. Most intriguingly, Cannadine notes that “Sullivan’s music was regularly played on state occasions at Buckingham Palace.” Specifically, “[t]he revived procession of Knights of the Garter, held at Windsor Castle, was a real-life version of the peers’ entrance and march from *Iolanthe*.”¹¹⁷ *The Mikado* thus appears increasingly English over the course of the twentieth century because it helped to create a dominant model of Englishness, not because it was composed to reflect an existing ideal. In this regard,

Englishness exists as a hyperreal phenomenon just as did Japaneseness in those reviews of the opera that praised *The Mikado's* accuracy. Second, *The Mikado* may still appear to be quintessentially English more than a century after its premiere because the model of Englishness forged at the time of its composition remains dominant today. Robert Colls and Dodd write that “it is within the shadow of that period [1880-1920], and its meanings, that we still live.”¹¹⁸ The denial of syncretism evident in *Mikado* scholarly orthodoxy today is thus attributable to numerous aspects of English self-definition. Simon Gikandi characterises the mutual desire on the part of both colonies and metropole to cast their respective histories as “immanent” and “insular” as an impulse that emerged “in the face of decolonization.”¹¹⁹ But the shaping of responses to this opera by a “moment of Englishness” suggests that such an impulse emerged much earlier, in a period commonly reckoned to be the zenith of the imperial project.

Finally, it is important not to paint the orthodox view of the opera in exaggerated strokes. To be sure, even those who assert *The Mikado's* Englishness most vigorously often concede that the opera contains Japanese elements. In this vein, Bradley writes of “one or two Japanese touches,” while emphasising that “the dominant musical influence” is that of the “English folk song tradition.”¹²⁰ Before drawing to a close, then, it is worth considering the most commonly cited of these elements—the Japanese “touches” in the opera’s orchestration. In

considering these elements, one makes a curious discovery: just as those elements of the opera asserted to be quintessentially English are more Japanese than an initial examination suggests, so too are those elements commonly labelled “Japanese” more English than one might expect. As Beckerman’s study of Japanese influences on Sullivan’s score reveals, the music contains “a variety of quasi-Oriental figures.”¹²¹ Looking at “Miya Sama,” the most prominent of these figures, first, one finds that the song offers its audience a blend of familiar and strange musical features. Its monophonic style and repetition of the pitches C, G, and A may be placed in the latter category, given the common association between such a style and East Asian music, while the use of repeated notes is typical of Sullivan’s oeuvre. The use of pentatonicism is another aspect of the orchestration that may be read as referring to both English traditions and ideas about Japan.¹²² Pentatonicism colours much of the score, figuring prominently in “Braid the Raven Hair” and “The Sun Whose Rays.”¹²³ Most of the overture was also composed of variations of the “Miya Sama” rhythm and melody.¹²⁴ The song thus provides an exotic motif that pervades the opera. Furthermore, Beckerman’s analysis of the full score suggests that almost half of its songs contain these “quasi-Oriental figures.” Sullivan’s transformation of the tune may be read as paradigmatic of Japanglian engagements. Beckerman explains that “the most important alteration ... allow[ed] him to anchor the melody firmly in C major.”¹²⁵ Japanese music was transposed—or, to continue the metaphor

pursued in the previous chapter, translated—into English. But as with any translation, the residue of the initial language remains. Finally, it should not be thought that Sullivan simply acted on the Japanese music; it seems that the Japanese music also acted on the composer, with pentatonicism becoming much more prominent in his post-*Mikado* work.¹²⁶

But is the original “Miya Sama”— which announces the arrival of the Mikado in the beginning of Act II – a purely Japanese article? Even before its reinterpretation by Sullivan, the song existed as a transcultural artefact, embodying both familiarity and strangeness for its Japanese audience. This is perhaps what made it appealing for the English composer, just as such a combination made ukiyo-e appealing as a model for European artists. It may also explain why the song is commonly thought by Gilbert and Sullivan scholars to be imitation Japanese music.¹²⁷ This marching tune was sung by soldiers of the imperial army, as they marched to the Edo Castle to reinstate the rule of the emperor in the civil war of 1868.¹²⁸ While it contains elements of the Japanese folk music tradition, it is also heavily influenced by the Western fife-and-drum music that was just being heard in parts of Japan at that time. Horiuchi Keizō describes this as the earliest known example of a Western-style tune composed in Japan.¹²⁹ In this sense, the song is closely associated with Japanese modernity, an

association strengthened by its status as an early object of commercial distribution and its link with the Meiji Restoration.

That Sullivan would select such a composition for translation into one of his operas is unsurprising when considered in the context of his larger career. Benedict Taylor describes as one of the composer's hallmarks a "stylistic pluralism that is not afraid to draw on a variety of national and historical styles."¹³⁰ In this regard, we might read Sullivan as the embodiment of the transcultural dynamic that I argue lies at the heart of late-Victorian England. In slightly different terms, he would be derided as a mere pasticheur, a producer of precisely the kind of pure imitation that his compatriot Christopher Dresser had observed in Meiji Japan.¹³¹ If Japan were, as Dresser and later Okakura Kakuzō alleged, a zone of imitation, the bricoleur Sullivan was precisely the man to represent it musically. Perhaps unwittingly, he employed what was never simply a traditional Japanese tune, but actually an early Japanglian composition. In so doing, he produced an art-form akin to the Linthorpe plate—a transnationally circulating commodity that was read as Japanese in England, and English in Japan. It would be myopic to simply state that he and Gilbert brought Edo Japan to Victorian London. For in selecting artforms such as the Westernised ukiyo-e and this already-hybrid tune as models of Japaneseness, the librettist and the

composer further blurred distinctions between English and Japanese cultural forms.

¹ W. S. Gilbert and Arthur Sullivan, *The Mikado*, in *The Complete Annotated Gilbert and Sullivan*, ed. Ian Bradley (New York: Oxford Univ. Press), pp. 558-651, p. 559, Act I, lines 3-9. Subsequent references to *The Mikado* are from this edition and will appear in the text parenthetically by act and line number.

² Classified advertisement for *The Mikado*, *The Era*, 14 March 1885, issue 2425.

³ Michael Beckerman, "The Sword on the Wall: Japanese Elements in *The Mikado* and Their Significance," *The Musical Quarterly* 73, 3 (March 1989): 303-19, 304.

⁴ "London Theatres," *The Era*, 14 March 1885, issue 2425.

⁵ "A Japanese Opera," *The Times*, 16 March 1885, issue 31395.

⁶ "Savoy Theatre," *The Daily News*, 16 March 1885, issue 12415.

⁷ "New Opera by Gilbert and Sullivan," *The Bristol Mercury and Daily Post*, 16 March, issue 11493.

⁸ "News of the Day," *The Bristol Mercury and Daily Post*, 16 March, issue 11493.

⁹ "Gilbert and Sullivan's New Opera," *The Aberdeen Weekly Journal*, 16 March 1885, issue 9389.

¹⁰ G. K. Chesterton, "Gilbert and Sullivan," in *The Eighteen Eighties*, ed. Walter de la Mare (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1930), pp. 136-58, 152.

¹¹ Arai Megumi, 'The Mikado and the Victorian Audience,' *Eigo Eibei Bungaku / 『英語英米文学』* [Anglo-American Literature in English] 33 (February 1993), pp. 285-300; Leslie Baily, *The Gilbert and Sullivan Book* (London, Spring Books, 1966), p. __; Michael Ffinch, *Gilbert and Sullivan* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1993), p. __; Caryl Brahms, *Gilbert and Sullivan: Lost Chords and Discords* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1975); and Bradley, preface to *The Mikado*, in *The Complete Annotated Gilbert and Sullivan*, pp. 553-6, 554.

¹² Bradley, preface, p. 554; Gayden Wren, *A Most Ingenious Paradox: The Art of Gilbert and Sullivan* (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 2001), p. 165.

¹³ E. P. Lawrence, "The Banned Mikado: A Topsy Turvey Incident," *Centennial Review* 18 (1974): 151-69.

¹⁴ Elaine Freedgood, *The Ideas in Things: Fugitive Meaning in the Victorian Novel* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 2006), p. 53.

¹⁵ Baily, p. 262; Brahms, p. 149; and Charles Hayter, *Gilbert and Sullivan* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1987), p. 59.

¹⁶ "The Stage: 'The Mikado,'" *The Academy*, 21 March 1885, issue 673.

¹⁷ "The Mikado," *The Athenaeum*, 21 March 1885, issue 2995.

¹⁸ Beckerman, pp. 308-9.

¹⁹ Chiba Yoko, "Japonisme: East-West Renaissance in the Late Nineteenth Century," *Mosaic: A Journal for the Interdisciplinary Study of Literature* 31, 2 (June

1998): 1-12, 9; Koyano Atsushi, "Yorokobi ga shihai shite iru – Yakusha no atogaki / 喜びが支配している 一役者の後書き [Joy Reigns – Translator's Afterword]," in *Kikageki Mikado* / 『喜歌劇ミカド』 [*The Comic Opera The Mikado*], ed. Atsushi, pp. 145-55; Inose Naoki, *Mikado no Shōzō* / 『ミカドの肖像』 [*Portrait of the Mikado*] (Tokyo: Shōgakkan, 1988); Miyazawa Shin'ichi, "'Mikado Monogatari' no Japonizumu [The Japonisme of *The Story of the Mikado*]," *Saitama Joshi Tanki Daigaku Kenkyū Kiyō* [*Saitama Women's Junior University Research Bulletin*] 10 (March 1993): 299-315.

²⁰ Aizawa Yoshihisa, "Japonizumu ni okeru Nihonzō – 'Mikado' o yomu [The Image of Japan in Japonisme – Reading *The Mikado*]," *Jinbun Gakka Ronshū* [*Journal of the Department of Humanities*] 29 (March 1996): 67-98, 95.

²¹ Kanayama Ryota, "Yūtopia to shite no Mikado [The Mikado as Utopia]," *Eigo Seinen/The Rising Generation* 150, 3 (June 2004): 146-9, 148.

²² Josephine Lee, *The Japan of Pure Invention: Gilbert and Sullivan's "The Mikado"* (Minneapolis: Univ. of Minnesota Press, 2010), p. xv.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ I have considered the Japanese Village exhibition in detail elsewhere. See Amelia Scholtz, "'Almond-Eyed Artisans' / Dishonouring the National Polity: The Japanese Village Exhibition in Victorian London," *Japanese Studies* 27, 1 (May 2007): 73-85.

²⁵ Freedgood, p. 28.

²⁶ Sato Hidehiko, "The Legacy of Dr. Dresser in Japan," in *Christopher Dresser and Japan* (Fukushima, Japan: Koriyama Museum of Art, 2002.), pp. 59-72, 62.

²⁷ David Bell, *Ukiyo-e Explained* (Folkestone UK: Global Oriental, 2004), pp. xv-xvi.

²⁸ Chiba, "Japonisme," p. 9.

²⁹ Lee, p. xiv.

³⁰ Elizabeth Hope Chang, *Britain's Chinese Eye: Literature, Empire, and Aesthetics in Nineteenth-Century Britain* (Stanford CA: Stanford Univ. Press, 2010), p. 179.

³¹ For more on syncretism as the domestication of foreign objects, see Lee, p. 19.

³² Donald Jenkins, "A Mirror on the Floating World," in *Designed for Pleasure: The World of Edo Japan in Prints and Paintings, 1680-1860*, ed. Julia Meech and Jane Oliver (Seattle and London: Univ. of Washington Press, 2008), pp. 15-31, 22-3.

³³ Bell, xv-xvi.

³⁴ Bell, p. xvii.

³⁵ Jenkins, p. 25.

³⁶ Sakamoto Mitsuru, "The Westernization of 'Ukiyo-e' at the End of the Tokugawa Era," in *Japonisme in Art: An International Symposium*, ed. Society for the Study of Japonisme (Tokyo: Kodansha, 1980), pp. 19-25, 19.

³⁷ David Pollack, "Designed for Pleasure: Ukiyo-e as Material Culture," in *Designed for Pleasure: The World of Edo Japan in Prints and Paintings, 1680-1860*, ed.

Julia Meech and Jane Oliver (Seattle: Univ. of Washington Press, 2008), pp. 169-89, 180.

³⁸ Michael Ainger, *Gilbert and Sullivan: A Dual Biography* (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 2002), p. 244.

³⁹ John Ruskin, *The Works of John Ruskin*, 39 vols., ed. E. T. Cook and Alexander Wedderburn (London: George Allen, 1903-12), 29:160, qtd. in Adam Parkes, "A Sense of Justice: Whistler, Ruskin, James, Impressionism," *Victorian Studies* 42, 4 (July 1999): 593-629, 593.

⁴⁰ Anna Jackson, "The Victorian Vision of Japan and China," written for the Victoria and Albert Museum, sourced at http://www.fathom.com/story/story_printable.jhtml?storyId=122285. Accessed 27/04/03. p. 3.

⁴¹ Chiba, "Japonisme," pp. 7-8.

⁴² Chiba, "Sada Yacco and Kawakami: Performers of Japonisme," in *Modern Drama* 35 (1992): 35-53, 51.

⁴³ Michael R. Booth, *Victorian Spectacular Theatre, 1850-1910* (Boston: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1981), p. 51.

⁴⁴ Chiba, "Japonisme," p. 4.

⁴⁵ Siegfried Wichmann, *Japonisme: The Japanese Influence in Western Art Since 1858* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1981), p. 16.

⁴⁶ Chiba, "Japonisme," p. 4.

⁴⁷ Bell, p. xv.

⁴⁸ Chiba, "Japonisme," p. 6.

⁴⁹ Joseph Litvak, *Caught in the Act: Theatricality in the Nineteenth-Century English Novel* (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1992), p. xiii.

⁵⁰ Bell, p. xix.

⁵¹ J. S. Bratton, Introduction to *Acts of Supremacy: The British Empire and the Stage, 1790-1930*, ed. Bratton, Richard Allen Cave, Breandan Gregory, Heidi J. Holder, and Michael Pickering (Manchester: Manchester Univ. Press, 1991), pp. 1-17, 2.

⁵² "The Mikado; or, The Town of Titipu," *The Pall Mall Gazette*, 16 March 1885, issue 1240.

⁵³ See, for example, "The Mikado; or, The Town of Titipu," *The Pall Mall Gazette*, 16 March 1885, issue 1240.

⁵⁴ Bell, p. xvi.

⁵⁵ Nina Auerbach, *Private Theatricals: The Lives of the Victorians* (Cambridge MA: Harvard Univ. Press, 1990), p. 9.

⁵⁶ Auerbach, pp. 11-2.

⁵⁷ In this regard, I would quibble with J. Peter Dyson's reading of *The Mikado* as a text that "tells us that it is possible to manipulate time toward a happy ending." The opera is, I would contend, much more like Samuel Beckett's *Waiting for Godot*—with which Dyson contrasts it—in its insistence that "such manipulation

is illusory" ("Waiting for Godot and *The Mikado*: The Game of Time," *ELN* 18, 1 (September 1980): 46-8, 48).

⁵⁸ David Cannadine, "Gilbert and Sullivan: The Making and Unmaking of a British 'Tradition,'" in *Myths of the English*, ed. Roy Porter (who else?) (Cambridge: Polity, 1992), pp. 12-32, 14-5. Cannadine also offers an extended discussion of the English theatrical roots of the Savoy operas.

⁵⁹ Elwood Hartman, "Japonisme in Nineteenth-Century French Literature," *CLS* 18, 2 (June 1981): 141-66, 153-4; Chiba, "Japonisme," p. 7.

⁶⁰ "A Japanese Opera," *The Times*, 16 March 1885, issue 31395; "The Mikado; or, The Town of Titipu," *The Pall Mall Gazette*, 16 March 1885, issue 1240.

⁶¹ "The Stage: 'The Mikado,'" *The Academy*, 21 March 1885, issue 673.

⁶² Booth, p. 14.

⁶³ Stephen W. Sears, *Gilbert and Sullivan and Their Victorian World* (New York: American Heritage Publishing, 1976), p. 178.

⁶⁴ Lee, p. 26.

⁶⁵ Bell, p. xviii.

⁶⁶ Takashina Shuji, "East Meets West: Western-Style Painting in Modern Japanese Art," in *Japan and Britain: An Aesthetic Dialogue, 1850-1930*, ed. Sato Tomoko and Watanabe Toshio (London: Lund Humphries, 1991), pp. 67-76, 76.

⁶⁷ Narasaki Muneshige, "Western Influence and Revival of Tradition in 'Ukiyo-e,'" in *Japonisme in Art*, pp. 313-22, 314.

⁶⁸ Sakamoto, p. 19.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ For the application of this notion of Asian vision as predicated upon irrationality, see Chang, p. 5.

⁷² Yamada, p. 13.

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ Pollack, p. 180.

⁷⁵ Gabriel Weisberg, "Summary," in *Japonisme in Art*, pp. 327-31, 327.

⁷⁶ Bell, p. xviii. See also Jenkins, p. 25.

⁷⁷ Narasaki, pp. 313-4.

⁷⁸ Sakamoto, p. 23.

⁷⁹ See, for example, *Reynolds's Newspaper*, 15 March 1885, issue 1805.

⁸⁰ Regina B. Oost, *Gilbert and Sullivan: Class and the Savoy Tradition, 1875-1896* (Aldershot UK: Ashgate, 2009), p. 63.

⁸¹ Booth, p. 16.

⁸² Lee, p. 31.

⁸³ Oost, p. 68.

⁸⁴ See Lee for a more sustained discussion of the relationship between commodity fetishism and the opera.

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- ⁸⁵ Christopher Lindner, *Fictions of Commodity Culture: From the Victorians to the Postmodern* (Aldershot UK: Ashgate, 2003), p. 7, emphasis original.
- ⁸⁶ Booth, pp. 25 and 27.
- ⁸⁷ Andrew H. Miller, *Novels behind Glass: Commodity Culture and Victorian Narrative* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1995), p. 6.
- ⁸⁸ As Josephine Lee notes, Anne McClintock has used the term "commodity racism" to refer to the "relationship between race and commodity fetishism" (p. xv).
- ⁸⁹ "The Mikado; or, The Town of Titipu," *The Pall Mall Gazette*, 16 March 1885, issue 1240.
- ⁹⁰ William Beatty-Kingston, "The Mikado; or, The Town of Titipu," *The Theatre*, 1 April 1885, new series 5.
- ⁹¹ "New Opera by Gilbert and Sullivan," *The Bristol Mercury and Daily Post*, 16 March, issue 11493.
- ⁹² "The Stage: 'The Mikado,'" *The Academy*, 21 March 1885, issue 673.
- ⁹³ Celler qtd. in Lee, pp. 3-4.
- ⁹⁴ See n79.
- ⁹⁵ Oost presents a sustained examination of marketing and the Savoy operas in chap. 3, "Shopping at the Opera," pp. 63-82.
- ⁹⁶ "Savoy Theatre," *The Daily News*, 16 March 1885, issue 12415.
- ⁹⁷ "The Mikado; or, The Town of Titipu," *The Pall Mall Gazette*, 16 March 1885, issue 1240.
- ⁹⁸ Pollack, p. 169.
- ⁹⁹ Pollack, p. 186.
- ¹⁰⁰ Bell, p. xiii and Pollack, pp. 170-1.
- ¹⁰¹ Bell, p. xxiii.
- ¹⁰² Pollack, p. 173.
- ¹⁰³ Oost p. 70.
- ¹⁰⁴ Jenkins, pp. 22-3.
- ¹⁰⁵ Krishan Kumar, *The Making of English National Identity* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2003), p. 210.
- ¹⁰⁶ Oost, pp. 64-5.
- ¹⁰⁷ Kumar, pp. 211-2.
- ¹⁰⁸ Simon Gikandi, *Maps of Englishness: Writing Identity in the Culture of Colonialism* (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1996), p. 32.
- ¹⁰⁹ Hartman, pp. 145-6.
- ¹¹⁰ Martha Chaiklin, *Cultural Commerce and Dutch Commercial Culture: The Influence of European Material Culture on Japan, 1700-1850* (Leiden: Research School of Asian, African, and Amerindian Studies, 2003), p. 173.
- ¹¹¹ Lee, pp. xiii-xiv.
- ¹¹² Cannadine, p. 28.

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- ¹¹³ Kumar, p. 224.
- ¹¹⁴ Kumar, pp. 214-5.
- ¹¹⁵ Philip Dodd, "Englishness and the National Culture," in *Englishness: Politics and Culture, 1880-1920*, ed. Robert Colls and Dodd (London: Croom Helm, 1986), pp. 1-28, 15-6.
- ¹¹⁶ Dodd, p. 22.
- ¹¹⁷ Cannadine, pp. 25-6.
- ¹¹⁸ Robert Colls and Dodd, preface to *Englishness: Politics and Culture*, n.p. .
- ¹¹⁹ Gikandi, p. 4.
- ¹²⁰ Bradley, p. 555.
- ¹²¹ Beckerman, pp. 308-9.
- ¹²² Beckerman, p. 307.
- ¹²³ Beckerman, pp. 309-10.
- ¹²⁴ Tom McCanna, "Pentatonic Sullivan," *Musical Times* 126, 1713 (November 1985): 649.
- ¹²⁵ Beckerman, p. 312.
- ¹²⁶ Paul Seeley, "The Japanese March in *The Mikado*," *Musical Times*, 126 (1710) (August 1985): 454-456, 456.
- ¹²⁷ Seeley, p. 454.
- ¹²⁸ Kurata Yoshihiro, "'Miya san miya san' no nazo / 「宮さん宮さん」のなぞ [The Riddle of 'Miya San Miya San]," in *Kikageki Mikado [The Comic Opera, "The Mikado]*, pp. 133-143, 133.
- ¹²⁹ Horiuchi Keizō, *Ongaku go-jū-nen-shi [A Fifty-Year History of Music]*, qtd. in Inose. Further bibliographic details not provided.
- ¹³⁰ Benedict Taylor, "Resituating Gilbert and Sullivan: The Musical and Aesthetic Context," in *The Cambridge Companion to Gilbert and Sullivan*, ed. David Eden and Meinhard Saremba (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2009), pp. 36-49, 42-3.
- ¹³¹ Taylor, p. 43.

Chapter Three

High Priests of the Exhibitionary Order:

Rudyard Kipling, Okakura Kakuzō, and the Japanese Exhibition-State

There is neither smoke nor haze, and in the clear light of a clouded sky I could
see down the narrowest alleyway as into the interior of a cabinet.

—Rudyard Kipling¹

It is in Japan alone that the historic wealth of Asiatic culture can be consecutively
studied through its treasured specimens . . . Thus Japan is a museum of Asiatic
civilization.

—Okakura Kakuzō²

A prominent Japanese art historian who lamented the “White Disaster” and an Anglo-Indian author best known for his coining of the term “the white man’s burden” would seem to make odd bedfellows. The intensity with which the one would come to support Western imperialism was certainly matched by that with which the other would decry it. But in this chapter I argue that near-contemporaries Okakura Kakuzō (1862–1913) and Rudyard Kipling (1865–1936) wrote of Japan in remarkably similar terms. For both, the Japanese national space

was an exhibition space—for Kipling a cabinet of curiosities, and for Okakura a museum. The congruencies between their conceptions of Meiji Japan may be attributed to similarities in the authors' biographies, the Japanglian trafficking of intellectual property—chiefly Social Darwinism—and the pervasiveness of what might be termed “exhibitionary thinking” in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. As in the pervious chapter, we are encountering here both coincidental and contact-based commonalities. Finally, in considering the similarities between their depictions of Japan while also remaining alert to their crucial differences, this chapter not only demands a reconsideration of the oeuvres of the two authors but also argues for the literal and epistemological prominence of exhibitionary structures in this period. In the latter respect, it repeats the first chapter's call for a move beyond the reductive panoptic model of vision to one of a proliferation of modes of seeing and being seen.

While often quoted by scholars of his work, Okakura's claim that “Japan is a museum of Asiatic civilization” has not yet been subjected to sustained interrogation.³ Rustom Bharucha, one of the few scholars to consider the term “museum” in regard to Okakura's work, devotes a few pages to the matter but does not pursue a close reading of the art historian's work in this light. Yet Bharucha evinces an awareness of the stakes of an investigation of the figure of the museum, calling it “[t]he most concrete of Okakura's metaphoric

verifications of Japan's leadership" of the rest of Asia.⁴ To explore the museum, then, is to define Okakura's conception of Meiji Japan's place in the world. In this chapter, I consider this metaphor as a foundational claim for the author's most substantial and widely read literary project—the trilogy comprised of *The Ideals of the East* (1903), *The Awakening of Japan* (1904), and *The Book of Tea* (1906), which was ostensibly a history of Japanese art but was also a polemic against Western influence in Japan and a proclamation of Japanese cultural superiority. Penned during a period in which a number of Japanese intellectuals produced English-language texts in a bid to "'explain' . . . Japan to the West,"⁵ the trilogy and texts like it, such as Nitobe Inazō's *Bushidō, The Soul of Japan* (1900), were instrumental in shaping Western intellectuals' conception of Japan in this period.⁶ For many of its Japanese readers, Okakura's trilogy would provide the intellectual justification for the militarism that would culminate in the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere and World War II.⁷ Today, *The Book of Tea* continues to influence non-Japanese ideas about the tea ceremony and Zen Buddhism in particular.⁸

It is also worth considering Okakura's more general significance. For while Kipling's place in both the English literary canon and discussions of Western imperialism is well established, the same cannot be said of this Japanese art historian. Okakura's position as a pioneer in the field of Japanese art history

is difficult to deny. After study under Ernest Fenollosa at the Tokyo Imperial University, the young art historian would go on to head the government-established Tokyo Fine Arts School and work as a curator for the Tokyo Imperial Museum. He would subsequently help to found the private Japanese Art Institute with the aim of preserving Japanese artistic traditions in the face of massive Western influence and spend a part of each year as Asian art curator at the Boston Museum of Fine Arts.⁹ Produced after a shift in emphasis from work as an advocate of artistic tradition within Japan to a position as a cosmopolitan proponent of Japanese interests, Okakura's trilogy would outline for a Western audience not merely a history of Japanese art, but the author's parameters for Japaneseness in a much larger sense.¹⁰

In the case of Kipling, arguably a more prominent figure (at least in English literary studies), the paucity of relevant scholarship is all the more surprising. Of the few studies of the writer's travels in "the country of Little Children," none attempts to unpack—or even refer to—this metaphor of the cabinet. Indeed, for most Kipling scholars, the thirteen letters that the writer sent back to the Anglo-Indian press describing his travels in Japan are a minor footnote in a long literary biography.¹¹ They are, however, surely worthy of greater attention than has hitherto been afforded them. The author is commonly described as a key proponent of British imperialism. In addition to works such as

the oft-cited “White Man’s Burden,” his stance on issues such as Irish Home Rule and Afrikaner and Indian nationalist campaigns lends ample support to such a characterisation. But the Kipling whom we encounter in these early letters from Japan is not so easily characterised as the “jingo imperialist . . . morally insensitive and aesthetically disgusting” described by George Orwell in his famous essay on the author.¹² The confidence and self-possession enunciated as characteristics of an ideal masculinity in “If—” —another of his most cited works—are, at most, only intermittently present. Rather, we encounter a young man entertaining some doubts about the imperialist enterprise and his place in the racial hierarchy upon which such an enterprise is based. As Ozawa Shizen notes, upon his return to Japan a mere four years later, the now famous author’s doubts would be replaced by the muscular admiration for those shouldering the “white man’s burden” for which he is better known today.¹³

Bringing the two authors together offers a significant pay-off. Perhaps most significantly, one is able to appreciate the extent to which the ethnic identities so strongly associated with them—“English” with Kipling and “Japanese” with Okakura—chaff against the realities of both their individual experiences and the intellectual climate in which they wrote. The intellectual positions associated with those identities can also be decoupled from each other. A close reading of Kipling’s encounters with Japanese subjects troubles orthodox

assumptions regarding the author's unalloyed support for the imperial project. Close analysis of Okakura's ostensibly anti-Western, pan-Asianist writing similarly troubles the application of such labels in its highlighting of similarities with Kipling's conception of Japan.¹⁴

In its analysis of the two authors' work, the chapter proceeds by adducing the respective characteristics of the two exhibitionary forms—in Kipling's case, the curio cabinet, and in Okakura's, the modern museum—and considering the ways in which those characteristics manifest in the texts' presentation of Japan and the Japanese. The chapter opens with a discussion of Kipling's initial letters from Japan, which were penned in the course of his 1889 visit to that country. The central contention of this discussion is that Kipling situates himself as a collector in relation to the Japanese people, whom he depicts as curios to be housed in the cabinet that is Japan. In the section that follows, I consider the ways in which Okakura's trilogy—*The Ideals of the East*, *The Awakening of Japan*, and *The Book of Tea*—produces the Japanese museum-state as a modern, unified, national entity committed to an imperative of display, while also eliding the imperialist foundations of the museum and vacillating in its acceptance of the institution's roots in Western epistemologies. In the course of its analysis of Okakura's work, this latter section also further develops the analysis of Kipling's letters. The chapter concludes with a consideration of the factors behind the

similarities in the two groups of texts that argues for a combination of contact and coincidence.

II

In 1889, after a dispute with his employers at the Anglo-Indian newspaper the *Pioneer*, the twenty-three-year-old Rudyard Kipling left India to pursue his literary fortunes in London. On his way there, he visited Singapore, Rangoon, and parts of Japan and the United States, all the while sending accounts of his travels back for publication in the *Pioneer* and Lahore's *Civil and Military Gazette* (another of his former employers). In his travels, Kipling was accompanied by his friends, Professor S. A. Hill—a government meteorologist who had been working at Muir College in Allahabad—and the professor's wife Edmonia.¹⁵ Journeying through a rapidly modernising Japan, the young author would repeatedly refer to the figure of the curio cabinet as he attempted to describe his surroundings, and to that of the curio as he narrated his encounters with the Japanese. As narrator, he would relate to Japan and the Japanese in the manner of a curio collector.

Upon initial consideration, it may seem odd to draw an analogy between Kipling's cross-cultural encounter and the practice of collecting aesthetic objects. But the analogy is thoroughly in keeping with the logic of Victorian interactions

with Japan. More specifically, perhaps the reason that Kipling's relationship with the country was experienced as one of Western subject and material object was that the relationship with the Japanese other was based primarily on an experience of ostensibly Japanese material culture—and a very much commodified material culture at that. In short, Japan meant *things*. The first encounter with Japanese culture for many nineteenth-century Westerners embodied exactly this combination of the aesthetic and the material; visitors to the 1862 International Exhibition in London were able to see a range of Japanese ceramics, lacquerware, and woodblock prints, all of which would become increasingly popular. Perhaps partly because these aesthetic objects had become cheap and readily available by late century, Japan was seen by many Westerners as a society in which art was democratized, available to all.¹⁶ In addition to the artworks sold at auction in London and Paris, Westerners were able to purchase Japanese and faux Japanese objects at department stores and at the more low-brow Oriental novelty stores that were especially prominent in the United States from the 1870s.¹⁷ The Japanese Village exhibition staged in Knightsbridge in 1884–85 constitutes one of the most interesting episodes in this history of Victorian Japonisme. While it purported to provide visitors with a view of a complete Japanese village, one of the aspects of the exhibition that attracted greatest interest was the selection of handcrafts on sale.¹⁸ The exhibition was a source inspiration for W. S. Gilbert's staging of *The Mikado*, which provides

a frequent point of visual reference for Kipling in his letters from Japan.¹⁹ Even though the young Kipling had spent the preceding six years in India, it would seem that the tide of Victorian interest in Japanese material culture had not left him behind. Against this background, his repeated recourse to the figure of the cabinet for descriptive purposes makes sense.

Cabinets of curiosities became a feature of many elite European homes in the late-Renaissance period. They took a variety of forms, including whole rooms that visitors entered to observe objects hung on the walls or placed on shelves, discrete glass cabinets with tiers for the various items, and even smaller sets of drawers that had to be opened in order for the viewer to see or handle the objects. The contents of these cabinets were as varied as their structuring. Wonders of the natural world, artworks, and fusions of these two categories were all featured in cabinets of curiosities. From the nineteenth century, what had been private collections housed in the home increasingly became public property exhibited in museums and galleries.²⁰ In his study of European cabinets of curiosities, Arthur K. Wheelock Jr. makes the point that hybrid objects that combined the natural and the artificial—objects in which “the hand of an artist had transformed nature”—held special fascination for collectors.²¹ Shirley Teresa Wajda notes that two of the primary functions of the curio cabinet in nineteenth-century America were the celebration of the glory of divine creation, and the

showcasing of human ingenuity.²² The hybrid object could fulfil both of these functions simultaneously.²³

This interest in such hybrid objects is also a feature of Kipling's letters from Japan. Here, we find numerous instances in which the author depicts the country and its people as fusions of the natural and the artificial. These instances can be broadly classed in two categories. In the first category, the natural landscape is described as being remodelled to fit the people. The land itself becomes an aesthetic object. "I knew they had cabinet-makers to make their houses," remarks the Professor, Kipling's travelling companion, "but I didn't know they had 'em to construct their fields" (p. 70). Kipling shares this sense of the Japanese landscape as a work of craftsmanship; for him, the fields are a "crazy quilt . . . exactly as Japanese pictures had led . . . [him] to hope for" (p. 70). We also encounter this imaginative reworking of the landscape in the first letter. Standing on a hill overlooking Nagasaki, Kipling observes "here and there a smudge of creamy pink to mark the bloom of the cherry trees" (p. 41). Here, the noun "smudge" carries the suggestion of human volition in the form of the action of the artist, the mark of the artist's hand upon the natural world. This artificiality also takes an olfactory form. The landscape is bathed in "the ever-present scent of camphor-wood," which Kipling describes as "the cleanest and most housewifely of smells" (p. 41). Once again, the narrator fuses the natural

and the artificial in a manner analogous to that of the most sought-after curios, for, as he puts it in one of his last letters, “unadulterated nature even in her sweetest aspects becomes swiftly monotonous” (p. 151).

There is a more significant sense in which Kipling creates hybrids of the natural and the artificial in his depictions of the Japanese people. Time and again, we find the author aestheticising the human animal, rendering the body in artistic terms. The first Japanese person to appear in the text is an “indigo-blue boy with an old ivory face and a musical voice” (p. 35). Here, the hybridity of natural and man-made is present on two levels. Indigo dye and ivory are both natural substances that are altered by artificial modes of processing. They are thus already hybridized prior to their fusion with the natural body in this description. Later in the letter, a young woman serving in the tea house is described as “ebon-haired, rosy-cheeked, and made throughout of delicate porcelain,” while the women as a group are admired for their “colour, form . . . and beauty” (p. 44). The latter description appraises the Japanese women for their conformity to the principles of artistic composition, while the former metaphorises the body as an object constructed from the materials of such a composition. In so aestheticising the Japanese, Kipling is also able to lock the Japanese into a static position, to “fix” them. Writing of the doll—a specific kind of aestheticised object—Susan Stewart makes the similar point that the object

"represents the still life's theme of arrested life."²⁴ This act of fixing is very much in accordance with the Victorian notion of a Japanese idyll, an unchanging haven from modern progress.²⁵

By setting the Japanese person in a kind of aesthetic aspic, Kipling is also executing a highly political move; for the Japanese to remain unchanged also entails the maintenance of their subordinate position in a global imperialist hierarchy. The Japanese body, as an aestheticised hybrid abstracted from the possibility of historical change, will maintain its place vis-à-vis the Western observer. This creation of the natural/artificial hybrid in the form of the aestheticised Japanese person bolsters the position of the narrator in that it allows him a free descriptive rein. Artworks are not only more available to individual interpretation than everyday objects; they actually *require* such interpretation. In this sense, the aestheticisation of the Japanese provides the writer of the ostensibly factual travelogue with freedom to use a larger colour palette. It allows the narrator-collector to be "not simply a consumer of objects," but the generator of a "fantasy in which [he] . . . becomes producer of those objects."²⁶ The construction of the natural/artificial hybrid in the text thus not only mimics the composition of the curio; it may also be read to serve specific ideological ends.²⁷

In setting the Japanese in such a way, Kipling also alienates them from the world of the quotidian, and with it, functionality, the capacity to perform necessary, everyday actions. This act of alienation resembles that of the collector, who, in removing objects from their original contexts, deprives such objects of their use value, of their capacity to perform the tasks that they had previously executed. In his "Aesthetics of British Mercantilism," James Bunn notes that the collector's act is defined by what might be termed a cauterizing violence, a refusal to observe the "proprieties of native history and topography" that results in the alienation of the object from the functions for which it was designed.²⁸ Similarly, in her narratologically based study of collecting, Mieke Bal suggests that a group of objects attains the status of a collection when the objects can no longer be said to have their original, pre-collection use value. For Bal, this "event of deprivation . . . [is] the core of collecting as itself a narrative . . . a change in nature [that] is a narrator's decision."²⁹

Working under the more general rubric of functionality, we might also say that, like the curio collector, Kipling the narrator deprives the Japanese of use value, of necessary functions. For Kipling, the Japanese are a largely indolent people. Theirs is a life lived in gentle sunshine, "always having picnics in the cherry-tree gardens" (p. 94). Of a piece with this notion of the indolent Japanese is the use of terms associated with play in relation to even the most essential

functions of Japanese society. In his first letter, Kipling refers to the process of political change in Japan as a mere game of “skittles” (p. 36). Even Japanese pack animals are made to look “like . . . horses in a pantomime” (p. 42). Moreover, the narrator laments the impending end of this perceived indolence: “the Japanese should have no concern with business, as you shall hear” (p. 36). Even the cities are defined by this inertia, “ly[ing] low among the hills” (p. 36). The few references to hard-working Japanese portray them in strikingly negative terms. Lacking the “ebon hair” and “rosy cheek[s]” of the young women in the tea house, they are “fat, ugly little people” (p. 117). Should the Japanese curio perform any necessary function, should it exhibit use value, it is either patronized as merely engaging in play, or scorned for losing its attractiveness.

The indolence of the Japanese, their lack of functionality, may also be related to the idea of the Japanese as perpetual children. Rather than being working adults, they are forever situated in an idealized childhood, citizens of “the Land of Little Children” (p. 184). As early as the third page of the first letter, the narrator describes infancy as a contagious state: “the elders must perforce be young lest the babies should grieve” (p. 37). Such is the power of this tendency toward the infantile that “Nagasaki is inhabited entirely by children” (p. 37). Furthermore, the traveller is assailed by mobs of children at almost every turn, the towns having “such thousands of children in their streets” (p. 37). (One

might object to my reading of Kipling's emphasis on Japanese babies on the ground that he may indeed have encountered a country replete with infants. Studies of Meiji period demography, however, refute the myth of a late-nineteenth-century baby boom.³⁰⁾

We might additionally link this infantilization of the Japanese to nineteenth-century racial theory. Among the many ideas about race circulating during this period, one of the most influential was the theory of recapitulation advanced by the French anatomist Etienne Seres. At its most basic, the theory proposed that "higher creatures repeat the adult stage of inferior creatures during their own growth" and therefore that "black adults resemble white children, and Mongolians resemble adolescents."³¹ The Japanese tended to be situated at a mid-point on this spectrum, relegated to the status of perpetual adolescents or older children. Isabella Bird, who visited Japan in the early 1870s, thus likened her Japanese guide to a child.³² Similarly, fellow traveller C. W. Dilke declared that "all who love children must love the Japanese . . . the most smiling of peoples."³³ Due to their infantile status, Kipling's Japanese can never truly work, and instead "play" with constitutional government, and "toy" with industrialisation. In these texts, a binary emerges, albeit tacit: that of the Japanese child watched over by the implicitly adult Western traveller. The travel memoir asks that the reader identify with the traveller, the adult pair thus engaged

together in the act of watching the Japanese child. In this way, the infantilisation of the Japanese found in Kipling's text may be read as furthering the cause of empire, perpetuating the notion of the white man surrounded by child-like racial others.

What is also significant about the figure of the child—and what additionally links the Japanese subject with the curio in Kipling's text—is the fact that the child is effectively a miniature of the adult. This miniature status is a defining feature of both children and curios. The curio, the child, and miniature status thus stand in triangular relation. Kipling repeatedly describes the Japanese people and Japanese objects in diminutive terms. From his vantage point in the tea house, he observes a "garden, fringed with a hedge of dwarf-pines and adorned with a tiny pond" (pp. 42–3). The *sake* bottle that measures a mere "four inches" in height is ironically described as a "lordly" vessel from which *sake* is poured into "a saucer so tiny that I was bold to have it filled eight or ten times" (p. 44). In a particularly significant metaphorical flourish, Kipling imagines the smallest Japanese children as "little Jap dolls such as they used to sell in the Burlington Arcade" (p. 37). This metaphor of the doll encompasses not only the figure of the child, but also that of the miniature, and finally, the fusion of these two figures into an object within the sphere of commodity relations. Here, we hit upon one of the most important characteristics of the miniature. In describing the

Japanese in miniature terms, Kipling renders them portable and thus also possessible, purchaseable, and, more to the point, *collectible*.³⁴ In this sense, the miniaturisation of the Japanese may be linked to an impulse toward drawing the Japanese body into the system of commercial exchange. The existence of such an impulse explains the narrator's response when he discovers that the curio dealer is familiar with conventional methods of commercial trickery. After his initial disorientation in the "cabinet-like" shop—another figure of miniaturisation—Kipling is "relieved when the cuckoo-man [the curio dealer] proved to be a horrid swindler" (p. 40).

Why is it that the miniature object is more readily possessible? Why is it that, as Gaston Bachelard puts it, "the cleverer I am at miniaturising the world, the better I possess it?"³⁵ An element in the possession of an object is the process of "coming to grips with it." Such an expression is particularly appropriate in this context, for it expresses both the need for the possessor to grasp the object physically, and the sense that possession also involves an understanding of the object, a familiarity with its visual intricacies. The miniature is more easily come to grips with than is a gargantuan object; it is more easily seen, with fewer perspectives needing to be adopted. When the miniature is an aesthetic object—and we have already noted that Kipling renders the Japanese in aesthetic terms—the act of "coming to grips" is perhaps even easier. There is the sense that the

object has a definite creator, and thus that it is possessed with finite detail, having sprung from a single mind. As Steven Millhauser notes, in contrast to the “unceasing revelation” threatened by the giant, “the miniature holds out the promise of total revelation.”³⁶ Indeed, Kipling is certainly aware of the role of the eyes in grasping detail and thus possessing an object. Another visit to a curio shop, described in the second letter, occasions the observation that “the joy of possession lives in the eye” (p. 55). Through observation, the travellers are “as rich as though we owned all that lay before us” (p. 55).

In Bal’s narratological schema of collecting, this act of possession also involves the incorporation of the object into the subject, or, put another way, the extension of the self to consume the object. This desire to incorporate the object stems from the loneliness that results from the unbridgeable separation between the subject and the object.³⁷ Before “de-othering” the object, however, the erstwhile collector must perform the opposite operation, transforming “the not-other object to be” into an “absolute other so as to be accessible to all.” Bal adds that “this is done by cutting objects off from their context.”³⁸(105). Bal’s description of the collecting process is largely applicable to Kipling’s experience, but the means by which the object is rendered an “absolute other” is defined not so much by the physical removal of the object from its context as by the imaginative transformation of the physical form of the object. Kipling

transmogrifies the Japanese person into an aestheticised miniature, but rather than attaining or reinforcing mastery via miniaturisation of the other—as is asserted by many theorists of the miniature³⁹—Kipling instead encounters the disruption of conventional hierarchical relations, as we see in his first letter.

Immediately prior to his entry into the curio shop, Kipling is engaged in comfortable reverie, “admiring . . . the surpassing ‘otherness’ of everything round me” (p. 40). His sense of the smallness of Japan and the Japanese is “soothing” in the support it provides for his vision of his place in a gendered hierarchy (p. 40); for in Japan, “nobody comes to tower over him, and he looks down upon all the women, as is right and proper” (p. 40). He envisages the Japanese curio-dealer as his anthropometric other. The building in which the man sells his wares is reduced to the size of a mere “cabinet,” while the man himself is repeatedly likened to a “cuckoo” (p. 40). But to complicate matters, he also succeeds in “othering” himself. That is, he becomes estranged not only from the Japanese miniature, but also from his own physical form. The swiftness with which the narrator’s complacency—based on a sense of the Japanese person’s absolute otherness—evaporates, is truly striking. Kipling’s observation about towering over women is immediately followed by extreme disorientation upon his entering the curio shop. He writes, “I passed in, feeling for the first time that I was a barbarian, and no true Sahib” (p. 40).

This estrangement from the self occurs in two ways. First, newly gargantuan, the narrator and his companion begin to struggle to fit into their own skins. After their encounter in the curio shop, the pair venture on to a tea house, where they “sprawl . . . ungracefully” before they are able to “fit [them]selves into graceful postures” (p. 43) and the Professor “nearly upset[s] the dinner table in a vain attempt to recline gracefully” (p. 44). Their own bodies become as ill-fitting as the clothes of the Japanese customs official over whom Kipling had “wept . . . because he was a hybrid” earlier in the day (p. 36). Second, this corporeal estrangement translates into an estrangement from the white colonial body, from the narrator’s identity as *sahib*. Kipling re-envisages himself as the ostensible inverse of the *sahib*—the savage. And this moment of shocking reversal involves not merely the suspicion of savage status, but the certainty of it. Of his position relative to the curio dealer, he reflects that “I feel myself your inferior, and you despise me and my boots because you *know* me for a savage” (emphasis added, p. 40). The text thus countenances the possibility of a rapid reversal of the privileged and subordinate terms in the *sahib*-savage binary. For Kipling, relativisation of size and, with it, physical perspective—the recognition that relative to the midgets he has depicted, he is a monstrous being—are accompanied by a form of cultural relativisation that radically destabilises colonial relations.

We might further relate this instability to the interstitial status of Japan in the late nineteenth century, to its status as both colony and colonizing power. Japan's dual status is reflected in the difficulties encountered by nineteenth-century racial theorists in their attempts to "fix" the Japanese in racial terms. The Japanese were commonly described, in Rotem Kowner's words, as "lighter than yellow, but not enough."⁴⁰ And Kipling is aware of the difficulty of categorization, remarking to Professor Hill that "the Japanese isn't a native, and he isn't a *sahib* either" (emphasis original, p. 54). In a sense, they were imagined as both, and yet neither.

This perceived instability in the racial hierarchy may have as much to do with factors peculiar to Kipling as it does with nineteenth-century geopolitics and imaginings of Japan. It was not simply that Japan occupied an uncertain place in the Victorian racial hierarchy; the author may also have harbored some uncertainties about his own identity. As mentioned, Kipling was visiting Japan on the way to London, where he would transform himself from a journalist writing almost solely for the Anglo-Indian audience to a literary celebrity in the larger English pond.⁴¹ On his return to Japan in 1892, he would write for London's *Times*, rather than Anglo-Indian newspapers. So, was this as much a journey to Englishness as it was to England? Many years later, in *Something of*

Myself, Kipling would reflect upon the vacillation inherent in his Anglo-Indian upbringing. He wrote of how, in his early childhood in India,

my *ayah* [the nanny] . . . or Meeta [the Hindu male servant] would tell us stories and Indian nursery songs all unforgotten, and we were sent into the dining-room after we had been dressed, with the caution 'Speak English now to Papa and Mamma.' So one spoke 'English', haltingly translated out of the vernacular idiom that one thought and dreamed in.⁴²

So the experience of cultural hybridity, and of not feeling quite at home speaking what was meant to be one's native language, was to resonate with Kipling even much later in life (he penned his memoirs in his seventies). We might speculate that it is this sense of a self existing between cultures—rather than firmly in one—that renders the author's identity as *sahib* so open to challenge in the Japanese curio shop.

Kipling's attempted "othering" of the Japanese may thus be read as the expression of a desire to assert both his place and that of Japan in a clear racial hierarchy. But this attempt is, paradoxically, a failure precisely in that it is *too* successful. In cultivating his estrangement from the Japanese, the *sahib* overshoots his mark and also finds himself estranged from his corporeal and

racial identity. Put another way, the miniaturisation of the Other is purchased at the expense of self-estrangement in the form of gigantification. (We witness a similar dynamic in *The Mikado*, in which the distancing effect of parody applies equally to putatively Japanese and English cultural elements.) In the face of this estrangement, even the new capacities of the giant to wreak havoc in the world of the miniature, cannot provide consolation: “again I tried to console myself with the thought that I could kick the place to pieces; but this only made me feel large and coarse and dirty—a most unfavourable mood for bargaining” (p. 40). The possibility of using such capacities simply reinforces the newly developed self-impression of savagery, and even results in injury to self. The violence that would be directed at the miniature Other is instead turned on the gargantuan self, the ungainly giant “whack[ing . . . his] head on the fragile lintel” (p. 40), and “blunder[ing] into the inside of a three-hundred-dollar cabinet” in the form of the shop (p. 40).

Kipling’s attempt at possession is not only stymied in the sense that it radically estranges the subject from itself; Kipling is faced with dissolution on a number on a number of fronts, certainly “a most unfavourable mood for bargaining” (p. 40). In the most comic sense, he claims to “have left my heart with O-toyo under the pines” at the tea house (p. 45). He also loses all physical volition and initiative. While he wishes to proceed with a fairly lengthy verbal

analysis of his own discomfort, Kipling finds himself instead proffering the non-committal “[o]h, ah yes. Awf’ly pretty. Awful queer way of doing business” (p. 40). He finds himself “involuntarily lower[ing]” his voice, unwittingly emulating “my low-voiced friend,” the curio dealer (p. 40). The subordinate position of the traveller becomes all the more apparent when contrasted with that of the Japanese curio dealer. The latter exhibits a degree of agency that is lacking on Kipling’s part. Unlike the flustered Englishman, the Japanese man is able to command the scene, “caus[ing] . . . tea to be brought” (p. 40). Even the beverage, a genuine object, is permitted greater agency than the hapless traveller, being endowed with the capacity to “complete . . . [his] embarrassment” (p. 40). In this way, the giant finds himself acted upon by the object. The women in the tea house—whom a more self-assured Kipling had assumed he could “look . . . down upon” (p. 40)—are similarly in control. Interestingly, this command of the scene is displaced onto the objects that the women present to the travellers, “chicken cunningly boiled with turnips” and a “cunning little lacquer box” (p. 44). Kipling’s self-estrangement is thus accompanied by a loss of volition. Finally, his last letter from Japan offers confirmation of the link between the attempt to take possession and this loss of self-control: “if he begins to buy curios...[a] man is lost” (p. 185). The collector not only fails to collect the exotic objects; he is also faced with the need to collect himself after a radical loss of composure.⁴³

But it should not be thought that the first letter presents only a failed

attempt at possession. In one important respect, the collector does encounter success. Upon leaving the curio shop, Kipling and his companion, the Professor, scale a hill and gain a panoramic view of the town that they have just left. This scene presents us with a special case of the miniature; we encounter here what Bachelard terms "the distant miniature."⁴⁴(172). Bachelard writes that, upon seeing a set of conventionally sized objects from a significant distance, the subject experiences an illusion of mastery over the objects; they become both enterable and possessible. Distance acts to erase conflicts, replacing the close view of disorienting detail with the tranquillity of the panorama. Kipling and the Professor are thus able to "possess from afar, and how peacefully."⁴⁵

When the pair ascend the hill, they are thus once again at ease in Japan. "What a country!" the excited Professor enthuses, his exclamation carrying the implication that he is able to experience visually the totality of Japan in this single moment (p. 41). This exclamation is followed by precisely the kind of easy assertion of racial superiority that had been untenable only minutes earlier in the curio shop. "[W]herever we go," he notes, "there's always some man who knows how to carry my kit" (p. 41). It is at this moment that Kipling is at last able to incorporate Japan in a way that had been impossible in the earlier scene. "I drank . . . Japan with my eyes and sniffed . . . the ever-present scent of camphor-wood" (p. 41). The giant has at last become the "consuming force . . . [the] devourer" described in Stewart's study of the miniature.⁴⁶ Ironically, although the subject is

now endowed with the giant's capacities, the frightening self-impression as giant has vaporized in the subject's mind, replaced by the complacent certainty that "we are ordinary human beings, after all" (p. 41). This counter-point to the scene in the curio shop suggests that the hysteria experienced in the shop may be partially attributed to a lack of physical distance from the object/other. With distance, a panoramic view may be attained, whereas when one is at close quarters with the object, it becomes difficult to get a proper view of it, even if it is miniature. The necessity of not only miniaturising the Japanese subject, but also gaining distance from the miniature, thus becomes all the more apparent.⁴⁷

Taken together, these two scenes suggest the primacy of the visual faculty in this text. For Kipling, as for many nineteenth-century Westerners who travelled to the country, the experience of Japan was, in a sense, primarily visual and largely silent.⁴⁸ Once again, we find a correspondence between Kipling and the figure of the collector on the one hand, and the Japanese person and the desired collectible on the other. In this text, the objectification of the Japanese is a guarantor of their silence and the collector's concomitant speech. The object requires the intercession of the collector in order that it might be explained individually and in relation to other objects. In this sense, the act of collecting is a self-serving one that, in literary terms, shores up the role of the narrator/collector by necessitating an explanatory narrative vis-à-vis the objects.

Kipling may be said to adopt the role of the explanatory narrator-collector in two senses. First, when he finds himself unable to communicate with the Japanese, he narrates/writes over the top of them, producing his own distinctly self-serving narrative. In the tea-house, Kipling, unable to understand the Japanese spoken by the young women who serve him, writes over the top of their speech, glossing their utterances in rather narcissistic fashion. What may well be ridicule on the part of the young women is assumed to be “admir[ation] in a foreign tongue” (p. 44). Second, the whole narrative may be said to take the form of a collection. The collected letters become the cabinet collection, with each letter an individual curio. Alternatively, or perhaps additionally, we might also see each individual letter as its own vessel containing curios. The description of the first letter, with its use of the language of containment, confirms this. The letter is subtitled as “containing a complete account of the manners and customs of [the Japanese] . . . people” (p. 35). Wajda suggests that in the nineteenth century, there was indeed a narrative form analogous to the curio cabinet. She writes that the term *cabinet* also refers to “a literary genre newly directed at children in the early nineteenth century, books detailing natural and man-made wonders and employing the same categories that distinguished the late Renaissance and Enlightenment cabinets of curiosities in Europe.”⁴⁹ In this respect, the analogous relationship between textual and literal cabinets is by no means new to Kipling’s text. What

does differentiate Kipling's work from that described by Wajda is that it fuses the cabinet genre with that of the travelogue.

At the heart of this fusion lies a tension—between revelation and concealment. That is to say, both the cabinet of curiosities as an object and Kipling's text vacillate between an impulse to display their curios and a contrasting impulse to protect and conceal such items. The cabinet commonly presented objects in plain view on well-spaced shelves so as to facilitate easy access for the eye. We might link the displaying cabinet with imperial aggrandisement. Wheelock finds that Renaissance cabinets were commonly designed with the intention of displaying the prosperity of the empire's outposts, or the imperial possessions, to use a term most appropriate in this context.⁵⁰ (Interestingly, such aggrandisement was predicated upon an impulse common to collectors—the desire to incorporate the possessions and their positive qualities into the self. As James Bunn notes, colonies “afforded the means by which foreign commodities could become “native” to the realm.”⁵¹ In this case, the imperium is analogous to the self, while the colony is to the collectible. The colony's prosperity is subsumed into that of the imperium.) Wheelock also suggests that while a cabinet may be a platform for aggressive display, it may also perform the opposite function, concealing that which it holds. Wheelock notes in his study of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century cabinets that precious,

“small-scale . . . possessions” tended to be stored in “special chests or ‘cabinets’ that were designed with many drawers, some hidden.”⁵² Along somewhat different lines, Thad Logan draws a connection between the cabinet and the privacy of the “cosy corner” in her study of the Victorian parlour.⁵³ These two contrasting functions of the cabinet may also be described in slightly different terms in the nineteenth century. In his history of nineteenth-century anthropology, David K. van Keuren writes of a turn away from the private collection and toward the public collection that was both public property and public responsibility.⁵⁴ While such a change did not necessarily entail a transformation in the actual structure of the cabinet, it does suggest a new vision of the vessel’s function, and with it, a new rationale for the cabinet, a move from private to public. Following on from the linkage described above between the display cabinet and imperial aggrandisement, we might further associate the preserving, storage cabinet with the protective obscuring of the colonial possession.

Kipling’s text situates itself in a complex way vis-à-vis these contrasting functions of the cabinet. On the explicit level, Kipling decries the English impulse toward aggrandisement, and conversely lauds the perceived protective or concealing impulse on the part of the Japanese collector. In his second letter, the narrator is critical of “[t]he Englishman” who “buys a dozen of these things

[curios] and puts them on the top of an overcrowded cabinet, where they show like blobs of ivory" (p. 56). One should also note that, in this instance, the reference to ivory functions subtly to link such a mode of curio keeping to empire. On the other hand, the Japanese collector "hides [his curios] . . . in a beautiful brocaded bag or a quiet lacquer box till three congenial friends come to tea," and the approving narrator asserts that "that is the way to enjoy what we call curios" (p. 56).

In terms of the imperialist metaphor, does the text favor the display or concealment of Japan? Does it seek to open the country—as Commodore Perry is commonly described as having done when he arrived with his fleet of warships in 1853—or does it hark back to the days of a closed Japan? It is indeed possible to read the text as advocating the closure of Japan, the protection of the exotic curios that it houses. Kipling and the Professor repeatedly lament the opening of the country, the extent of foreign influence, and the results of industrialization. Perhaps most strikingly, the narrator's observation about the Japanese collector's hiding his curios is followed by a similar remark on the part of the Professor. He reflects that

"it would pay us . . . to establish an international suzerainty over Japan; to take away any fear of invasion or annexation, and pay the

country as much as ever it chose, on condition that it simply sat still
and went on making beautiful things while our men learned. It
would pay us to put the whole Empire in a glass case and mark it,
'Hors Concours, Exhibit A.'"

(p. 56)

While the cabinet described by the Professor may not conceal the object, it is certainly designed with protection in mind. And Kipling shares this notion of a country requiring protection, exhorting his travelling companion to "start a mission and save Japan from herself . . . [to] go and tear up the railway and pull down the telegraph poles"(p. 105). It should not be assumed that the text situates itself in opposition to imperialism. Even if we accept the argument that Kipling wishes to keep Japan closed, such a position may also be linked to a desire to keep the country not simply undeveloped, but also in a permanent state of economic vassaldom. Kipling indeed assumes that such a state of affairs represents the most logical order of things: "the idea of Japan standing up in its wool-boots and passing criticism on us made me laugh in my informant's face" (p. 164). Protectiveness shades into paternalism.

While certain element of the text suggest a desire to house the Japanese curios and Japan itself in a protective cabinet, the text also performs a rather different operation. The writer appears to be aware of this function of the text, as

he writes of the act of writing as a form of desecration; a landscape is described as “lovely beyond the defilement of the pen” (p. 133). It should also be noted that the narrator repeatedly predicates his comments upon the assumption that readers can and should visit Japan. The reader is introduced to Japan as though the reader were a proponent of imperialist expansion, as “another Cortez” (p. 35). Moreover, the narrator himself exhibits a desire to uncover the Japanese curios, however delicately they may be concealed. In a later scene, Kipling and his travelling companion walk through another “cabinet-like” building, in this case a monastery, opening curtains here and there, uncovering and surprising praying monks (p. 91). There is little concern for the proprieties of concealment in such a scene. The text thus exhibits two of the conflicting impulses that may be associated with the structuring of the cabinet. On one level, its narrator seems to support the closure of the country and privileges its analogue, a protective mode of collecting. Yet the text functions to further the very process of opening that it decries and is structured much like the analogous aggrandizing cabinet. In this way, Kipling’s letters manifest what Stewart describes as the movement “of the collection’s space . . . between the public and the private” (p. 155). This vacillation between concealment and aggrandisement—represented here in the figure of the cabinet—surely constitutes a significant ambivalence in the imperialist world view.

In interrogating the trio of the collector/Kipling, the cabinet/Japan and

the curio/the Japanese body, I have attempted to illuminate Kipling's complex encounter with a country that was both colony and colonial power, vassal state and imperium. In many significant ways, the figure of the cabinet is analogous to Kipling's Japan, the collected object to his rendering of the Japanese, and the collector to Kipling himself. At the hand of the young writer, the Japanese become highly aestheticised, collectable objects. In thus "setting" the Japanese, Kipling simultaneously removes them from the passage of time and deprives them of functionality. Depicted as children watched over by the adult Englishman, the Japanese are also miniatures of fully mature human beings. This miniature status is another feature that Kipling's Japanese share with the curio. But the relative positions of the tiny, collectible Japanese and the full-sized, adult Englishman are open to challenge and Kipling's attempt in the curio shop to assert the unchanging otherness of the Japanese produces the very opposite of the stability and self-possession that he seems to be seeking. It is not only that Kipling's relationship with the Japanese curio/subject is unstable; his experience of Japan as a whole is also based upon conflicting impulses—of revelation or aggrandisement on the one hand, and concealment and protection on the other. This duality defines both the curio cabinet and the imperialist project in a larger sense.

III

Thirteen years later, when Okakura penned *The Ideals of the East*, the first installment in his trilogy, Japan was still located interstitially in geopolitical terms. But the shaking off of the much-resented unequal treaties and victories in the Sino-Japanese War (1894–95) and later the Russo-Japanese War (1904–05) had significantly altered the country's self-assessment.⁵⁵ Okakura's trilogy might be read as a contribution to what Sandra Wilson terms the "discourse of national greatness," which was a prominent feature of late-Meiji and early-Taisho thought.⁵⁶ As this section will elaborate with regard to Okakura's trilogy, however, that discourse was never able to completely smother the anxieties and contradictions upon which it was founded. The section will explore the trilogy's positioning of Japan via the central metaphor of the Japanese "museum of Asiatic civilizations," adducing the various characteristics of the museum as an institution and considering the ways in which those characteristics are attributed to the nascent Japanese nation-state.

First and foremost, the museum has historically been associated with modernity. For developing countries in particular, the institution could function as both a symbol and driver of modernisation. It would do this by both attesting to the nation's "long and deep cultural heritage"⁵⁷ and by diffusing knowledge of that heritage beyond the most privileged classes.⁵⁸ The Meiji oligarchs' eagerness to assert that Japan had achieved this modern status helped define the country's

relationship with both the rest of Asia and the West. As Brij Tankha notes, “the idea that Japan had mastered the instruments of modernity fuelled its drive to lead Asia against the political and cultural hegemony of the West.”⁵⁹ In this context, it is unsurprising that Okakura’s trilogy characterises the Japanese museum-state as modern chiefly via juxtaposition with an Asia in ruins. To be sure, *The Ideals of the East* is best known for its opening assertion that “Asia is one,” that “the Himalayas divide, only to accentuate, two mighty civilizations, the Chinese . . . and the Indian” (*IE*, p. 13). But the trilogy’s oft-cited expressions of pan-Asian unity are troubled by Okakura’s positioning of Japan within the flow of time in contradistinction to a stagnant Asia. Indeed, Asian decay is revealed even prior to those famous opening lines. Sister Nivedita’s preface to the *Ideals* presents an India “divorced from spontaneity by a thousand years of oppression,” having “lost her place in the world of joy and the beauty of labour” (*IE*, preface).

China’s alienation from the continued flow of time is presented in rather more dramatic terms, the result of “dynastic upheavals, the inroads of Tartar horsemen, the carnage and devastation of infuriated mobs” (*IE*, p. 15). These events “have left China no landmarks, save her literature and her ruins, to recall the glory of the Tang emperors or the refinement of Sung society” (*IE*, p. 15). In the latter case in particular, memory is presented as a casualty of socio-political

upheaval. In contrast with the stagnation and amnesia of China and India, Okakura's Japan is defined by "the unique blessing of *unbroken* sovereignty," one factor that has rendered it "the real repository of the trust of Asiatic thought and culture" (*IE*, p. 15). The smooth passage of time that has taken Japan with it, then, has allowed it to maintain memory and therefore to attest to the long history required of a modern state.

It is not merely the case that Japan maintains a memory of its own indigenous traditions while the rest of Asia is defined by cultural amnesia. As the last quotation suggests, it is also the case that Japan functions as the memory bank of the rest of Asia. In a move that resembles what Johannes Fabian has termed "the denial of coevalness," Okakura locates the rest of Asia in the Japanese past. India, which offers "only a past glory in the mouldy walls of Ajanta" (*IE*, p. 15), is not so much another world player as it is "the holy land of our [the Japanese people's] most sacred memories" (*IE*, p. 117). This location of non-Japanese Asia in the past is also a feature of *The Awakening of Japan*. In this later text, it is "Asia . . . who transmitted to us her ancient culture, planted the seed of our regeneration" (*AJ*, p. 178). But Asia has not regenerated with Japan; rather, "until the moment when we shook it off, the same lethargy lay upon us which now lies on China and India" (*AJ*, p. 178). This "lethargy" also has a cognitive dimension. In their stagnant ruin, India and China are unable to

recognize the need to protect their treasures. The Japanese people's "mental standpoint of a few generations back was that of the conservative Chiense patriot of today, and we saw in Western advance but the probable encompassing of our ruin" (*AJ*, p. 216). Asia's location in the past relative to Japan thus also positions it as Japan's cognitive inferior. Japan's modernity is partly an intellectual condition.

At this point, the reader might be hearing echoes of Kipling. Whereas he positions himself as the European saviour of a decrepit Japan, Okakura positions himself in a parallel fashion vis-à-vis non-Japanese Asia. Indeed, in a number of respects, Okakura's rhetoric regarding Japanese modernity and Asian decay is very much a replication of Orientalist discourse on Asia— and particularly the exhibitionary instantiations of that discourse. Bennett writes that "[i]n the context of imperial displays . . . Oriental civilizations were allotted an intermediate position in being represented either as having at one time been subject to development but subsequently degenerating into stasis or as embodying achievements . . . inferior to the standards set by Europe."⁶⁰ With its "ruins" and its "lethargy," Okakura's Asia is clearly relegated to the former position. Okakura was not alone in echoing Western Orientalist discourse on Asia. The international exhibition space provided a venue in which Japanese authorities were able to assert Japan's modernity and draw themselves closer to

Western powers as members of a chorus denigrating Chinese backwardness.⁶¹

Okakura himself was a significant presence at one of the largest of these meetings, the 1904 St. Louis International Exhibition. In using the rest of Asia as a foil for Japanese modernity, his writing not only echoes Western Orientalist discourse but also furthers the Meiji government's agenda.

As is, by now, well established, the flipside of Western denigration of Oriental backwardness was a nostalgic primitivism—a mode of thinking that the international exhibition system both relied upon and encouraged. Timothy Mitchell writes that the exhibition “persuades us that the world is divided neatly into two realms, the exhibition and the real world.”⁶² The latter “appears as a place completely external to the exhibition . . . a pristine realm existing prior to all representation.”⁶³ He adds that the Orient functioned as just such a “great ‘external reality’ of modern Europe—the most common object of its exhibitions, the great signified.”⁶⁴ In transposing this Orientalist binary from Europe and Asia as a whole onto Japan and the rest of Asia respectively, Okakura may indeed be endowing China and India with an essence, a reality that Japan is perceived to lack. Of particular interest in Okakura's denigration of these two civilisations is that use of memory as the fulcrum point, the difference between Japan and the rest of Asia. As with the rest of his derision, we might posit a more admiring, nostalgic subtext. Jacques Derrida suggests, in *Archive Fever*, that the

establishment of the archive—an institution that both resembles and overlaps with the museum—does not signal the possibility of perfect preservation of memory. Rather, it “takes place at the place of the originary and structural breakdown of the said memory.”⁶⁵ Coupled with Mitchell’s notion of the Orient as the authentic space outside the museum, Derrida’s notion of the archive as symptomatic of the onset of amnesia/forgetting offers another light in which to read Okakura’s positioning of Japan as the “museum of Asia.” The textual establishment of the Japanese museum—and the external “reality” of the Orient—speaks not only to a sense of arrival in the achievement of modern status but also to the anticipation of loss, loss of the “memory” of the Asian cultural forms upon which Japan is built.

In considering Okakura’s use of the museum metaphor as an assertion of Japanese modernity, we are also brought to reconsider Kipling’s text. It is unsurprising that the two authors should rely on different exhibitionary technologies in metaphorising Japan given that Kipling places Japan in the position of Oriental other, while Okakura seeks to place Japan in the position of the modern metropole and the rest of Asia in that position of otherness. Next to Okakura’s thoroughly modern museum, Kipling’s cabinet starts to appear decidedly pre-modern. Indeed, that smaller exhibitionary form was an antecedent of the museum; the private, princely collection would become the

public institution. With its accumulation of the often random discoveries of a Renaissance-period male aristocrat, the cabinet gestures to both pre-modern epistemologies and social structures. Its connection with the concept of the curiosity also hints at the freakshow. It is therefore unsurprising that Okakura, replicating Bennett's notion of exhibitionary history as the destruction of previous forms of display, would seek to write over the cabinet with the museum.⁶⁶ And Kipling, for his part, might be said to position himself as the aristocratic male collector in his presentation of Japan as a cabinet of curiosities. Returning to Fabian's conceptual schema, it would appear that Kipling's choice of metaphor constitutes a double denial of Japanese coevalness vis-à-vis Europe. As discussed in the previous section, Japan is lodged in a glass case and therefore abstracted from historical change, fixed for posterity; but the case in which it is lodged is itself also located in the past.

In its movement from the private home to the public space, the metamorphosis of exhibitionary modes from cabinet to museum is also indicative of the development of the nation-state as the dominant form of political organisation in Europe. Whereas the cabinet is pre-national, the museum is most decidedly national. The nineteenth-century museum simultaneously "convert[ed] signs of luxury, status, or splendor"—the kinds of objects previously presented in the princely collection—"into . . . the heritage and

pride of the whole nation” and trumpeted the role of the state as the protector of that heritage.⁶⁷ This evocation of a larger message beyond the individual exhibits contrasted the museum with the cabinet, which testified only to the taste and status of a single collector.⁶⁸ In addition to encouraging support for the state on the part of each individual visitor, the museum nurtured visitors’ sense of themselves as part of a national polity (Benedict Anderson’s “imagined community”) by allowing for greater inter-class mingling that would have been impossible in the reception halls of the princely collection. There appears, then, to be a homology between the museum and the state, with both seeking to draw disparate elements, whether people or objects, into a centre.⁶⁹ This drawing together was a particular imperative for the Meiji state, which sought to assert its modern status partly via the creation of a national polity. In Meiji Japanese exhibitionary spaces, the nurturing of national loyalty and pride in Japanese modernity therefore went hand in hand. As Tomio Kentaro writes, “once in the crowds, people looked into each other’s faces and silently agreed contentedly that they were the majority living in the modern world.”⁷⁰ He adds that “it is in that space . . . [that] the new historicity of the nation evolved.”⁷¹

In its presentation of the Japanese museum-state, Okakura’s texts “nationalises” Japan in a number of ways. In the first place, the trilogy defines art not so much in terms of individual subjectivity but rather in terms of national

consciousness. It is “the expression of the highest and noblest of our national culture” (*IE*, p. 16). Consequently, a painting falls down where it “fail[s] to catch the truly national element in art” (*IE*, p. 113). And this national consciousness is presented as no recent development, either. *The Ideals* makes reference to the existence of “national customs” as early as the Asuka period, which Okakura dates between 550 and 700 AD. Interestingly, *The Ideals* presents a strange slippage with regard to nationalisation in the days of the Meiji Restoration, with the men who would become the Meiji oligarchs described as “the mighty statesmen who *rebuilt* the new Japan” (*IE*, p. 118, emphasis added). The contradiction between the concept of newness and that of a reconstruction of a previously existing entity hints at the possibility that Okakura’s national polity may not be altogether ancient, that the author may be helping to construct the Japanese nation-state rather than merely observing its aeons-long existence.

Bringing different groups into contact is not, in itself, sufficient for the construction of a national polity. As the Meiji oligarchs were well aware, a range of competing, sub-national allegiances—notably to class and regional groups—would also have to be dealt with.⁷² What Wilson terms a “discourse of national greatness,” a facet of mid-late-Meiji thought that, in its emphasis on the convergence of the nation and the state, helped to weaken these sub-national forms of identification.⁷³ *The Ideals of the East* helps to sculpt national identity not

so much by erasing such forms of identification as by raising them to national status. Specifically, *The Ideals* appears to equate “Japanese” with “Yamato,” which, while the dominant ethnic affiliation in Japan in that period, was by no means the only one. As Rustom Bharucha observes, “there is no place in Okakura’s cultural genealogy for the aboriginal Ainu, who were driven away by the Yamato race, which in turn absorbed other ethnic groups to consolidate ‘the Empire of the Rising Sun.’”⁷⁴ In a passage that highlights Yamato separateness but soon erases it, Okakura writes that

[t]he origin of the Yamato race, who drove
the aboriginal Ainu before
them into Yezo and the Kurile Islands, in
order to establish the Empire of the Rising
Sun, is so lost in the sea-mists out of which
they sprang, that it is impossible to divine the
source of their art-instincts . . . Their religion,
known as Shinto, or the Path of Gods, was the
simple rite of ancestor-worship—honouring
the names of the fathers who were gathered
to the groups of Kami or gods, on the mystic
mountain Takamagahara, the highland of

Ama — an Olympus which had the Sun-Goddess as its central figure. Every family in Japan claims descent from the gods who followed the grandson of the Sun-Goddess in his descent upon the island, by the eight-rayed pathway of the clouds, thus intensifying the national spirit which clusters round the unity of the Imperial throne.

(*IE*, p. 20)

This short passage begins by presenting the Yamato in contradistinction to other groups residing in the Japanese archipelago, namely the Ainu (who, regardless of their origins, were classified as Japanese subjects in the Meiji period). The slippage from “Yamato” to Japanese” begins with the mystification of the origins of the Yamato, their springing from “the sea-mists.” The slippage continues with the description of Shinto belief. Such a belief system is initially only “their religion,” that is, that of the Yamato. It follows from this that one would expect the Sun-Goddess figure so central to Shintoism to carry significance only for Yamato subjects. But here, the text transforms Yamato identity from something defined by distinction from another group, to a simile for Japaneseness, a characteristic of “every family in Japan.” To be Japanese, then, is to be Yamato.

Okakura's rhetoric of national essentialism is also highly dependent on this equation of Yamato identity with Japaneseness. This becomes particularly apparent in the later chapters of *The Ideals*. The current state of confusion engulfing Japan is contrasted with a past "clear and continuous as a mala, a rosary, of crystals" (*IE*, p. 131). In those "early days of the Asuka period," Japan's singular "national destiny was first bestowed, as the receiver and concentrator, by her Yamato genius, of Indian ideals and Chinese ethics" (*IE*, p. 131–2). Here, while Japan may be a zone of syncretism (more on this later), it is crystallised into the singular "Yamato genius." Moreover, in spite of contemporary confusion, Okakura is still able to point to a single, national vision (albeit a conflicted one), to a "clouded" "mirror of Yamato" (*IE*, p. 132). By eliding ethnic differences within the nascent Japanese polity and, more specifically, by raising Yamato identity to the level of national identity, Okakura is able to advance a rhetoric of cultural essentialism.

In a similar manner, Okakura also raises familial identification to the level of national identity in order to strengthen the notion of a single, unified, Japanese society. In *The Ideals of the East* and *The Awakening of Japan* in particular, one encounters the deployment of the rhetoric of Meiji "family-state" ideology with regard to the national polity. In espousing such an ideology, the Meiji state presented as national "mystified family values . . . [in order] to legitimate the

state-led mobilization of man and things.”⁷⁵ Meiji subjects were thus encouraged to think of the family and the state as homologous structures. In Okakura’s trilogy, the world of Japan’s pre-modern handicraft economy thus becomes the “*heirloom of ages*,” a trope that not only gestures toward the concept of the nation as family but also unifies Japanese across different historical periods (*IE*, p. 129, my emphasis). On a more abstract level, Okakura notes that “the populace and the lower classes”—a phrase that, curiously, suggests that the two do not overlap—“are making their own the consecration of the samurai, the sadness of the poet, the divine self-sacrifice of the saint . . . are becoming liberated, in fact, into their national *inheritance*” (*IE*, p. 132, my emphasis). Here, the martial, artistic, and spiritual ideals shared by that national family offer a bridge over class divides. *The Awakening of Japan* similarly presents Japanese society as a family that shares a “*thought-inheritance*” in the form of a tradition of imperial loyalty, something that has been a feature of Japanese thinking “from her very beginning” (*AJ*, p. 187, my emphasis). In each case, an inherited legacy of abstract ideals unites both members of the contemporary Japanese polity with each other, and that contemporary polity with previous generations of Japanese. Japan is a single entity both synchronically and diachronically.

But ethnicity and familial identity are not the only forms of sub-national affiliation. In order to shape a Japanese national polity and thus create his

museum-state, Okakura must also account for class divisions. This finessing of class differences is apparent in *The Ideals* in the insistence that even “the Japanese peasant traveler . . . goes from no place of interest on his wanderings without leaving his *hokku* or short sonnet, an art-form within reach of the simplest” (*IE*, p. 129). Questions of literacy and the capacity of the poor to escape labouring obligations in order to travel are left unanswered. These questions are also elided in *The Book of Tea*, in which the aestheticist philosophy of “Teaism” provides social glue. Elisabetta Porcu describes the tea ceremony as a “rather expensive art . . . surely not an art of the less well off even at the time the book was written.”⁷⁶ Nevertheless, for Okakura, such a philosophy has not only defined every social class, “permeat[ing] . . . the elegance of noble boudoirs, and enter[ing] the abode of the humble”; it also defines every facet of life. “Great as has been the influence of the tea-masters in the field of art,” Okakura notes, “it is nothing compared to that which they have exerted on the conduct of life” (*BT*, pp. 283–4). He goes on to enumerate some of the areas in which Teaism has influenced Japanese life, adducing cooking, dress, flower arranging, and the more abstract “natural love of simplicity” and appreciation for “the beauty of humility” as examples (*BT*, p. 284). A broad swathe of Japanese life—from concrete practices to intangible modes of thought—is thus presented as being shaped by a form of aestheticism. By presenting all Japanese as adherents to this aestheticist philosophy, the text elides the differences that still divide the nascent national polity and therefore

obstruct the erection of the museum-state.

In this aestheticisation of Japanese life, we may once again hear echoes of Kipling. At least upon initial consideration, Kipling and Okakura appear to share an “aestheticentrist” perspective on Japanese life, to use Karatani Kōjin and Sabu Kohso’s terminology. Karatani and Sabu writes of a French “enthrall[ment]” with a Japan defined by “things such as Ukiyo-e and Zen, and not the real existing Japan that threatens France with its economic power, namely, Japan as the other.”⁷⁷ This attitude is essentially the obverse of an Orientalist stance defined by a more obvious power asymmetry: “looking down on the other as an object of scientific analysis and looking up at the other as an aesthetic idol, Karatani and Kohso observe, “are less contradictory than complicit.”⁷⁸ Yet interestingly, with their mourning for pre-industrial economic forms, “aestheticentrist” always appear as anticolonialists.”⁷⁹ In his desire to go and tear up the railway and pull down the telegraph poles” and “start a mission and save Japan from herself,” Kipling, for his part, appears to be the consummate aestheticentrist (and so, for that matter, does Dresser).

One is tempted to place Okakura, with his emphasis on the all-enveloping nature of the Japanese worship of the beautiful, in the category of the

aestheticcentric. But Okakura's aestheticisation of Japanese life begins to seem more strategic than naïve when considered alongside his frequent discussion of the connections between the marketing of Japanese art—and an image of the Japanese as artistic—on the one hand, and Japan's geopolitical status on the other. Put simply, Okakura's trilogy presents art not as a refuge from warfare, but rather *as* warfare: "Technique is thus but the weapon of the artistic warfare ; scientific knowledge of anatomy and perspective, the commissariat that sustains the army" (*IE*, p. 125). And just as art is a form of warfare, the converse is also true. In Okakura's trilogy, the Sino-Japanese War is defined in the same terms as might be used for art: as a form of self-expression—as "a natural outgrowth of the new national vigour, which has been working to express itself for a century and a half" (*IE*, p. 122)⁸⁰ In concluding the trilogy with the ritual suicide of tea master Sen Rikyu, *The Book of Tea* dramatically connects the worship of beauty with martial violence. As Miya Elise Mizuta makes clear, the Meiji government was also deeply cognizant of this connection. Mizuta writes of the way in which the government prosecuted the Russo-Japanese War in two theatres—the battlefield and the 1904 St. Louis World's Fair. In a lecture presented at the latter, Okakura would employ perhaps his most stridently martial language yet, with Japanese painting becoming "a potent machine invented to carry on a special kind of artistic warfare."⁸¹ Finally, the more nationalistic segments of the Japanese populace would adopt Okakura's chiasmatic rhetoric of aestheticised

warfare and bellicose art—his trilogy would be used as intellectual justification for twentieth-century Japanese militancy.⁸² Okakura may have presented an aestheticised Japan, but his was by no means a pacific vision. This was no simple case of unalloyed aestheticism. To construct a museum-state, then, is not simply to lie in awe of Oriental beauty.

There are other factors that might make ostensible aestheticism—and, more specifically in this context, the notion of Japan as a museum, a thoroughly aestheticised environment—strategically useful for an intellectual seeking to “explain Japan” to a Western audience. As Mizuta notes, Okakura penned his trilogy at a time when the notion of the Japanese as a people of art was already familiar to a Western audience—so familiar that the image of Japan as an artistic fantasy had largely eclipsed any sense of the country as a functioning political entity.⁸³ At the same time, this equation of Japan with willow-print-plate fantasy was increasingly threatened by the newer discourse of the Yellow Peril. Indeed, Okakura makes repeated reference to the deleterious impact of such a discourse on Japan’s geopolitical position, to the “curious web of facts and fancies which has been woven concerning us” (*BT*, p. 271). His presentation of Teism as a an all-encompassing factor in Japanese life might thus be read as an attempt to replace the discourse of the Yellow Peril with an earlier discourse that may have better served Japan’s geopolitical interests even as it kow-towed to Western

condescension. So, while both Kipling and Okakura might appear to be aestheticist mirror images of each other, their common aestheticisation of Japanese life is rather more complex. We might speculate that while Kipling was producing Japan as he wanted to see it, Okakura was presenting the same country as he imagined Western readers needed to see it if they were to mute their hostility toward the Yellow Peril. In presenting Japan in highly aestheticised terms, he was also able to produce a united, national polity unfettered by class divisions.

The museum does not merely attest to the existence of the national polity. It is also founded upon a particular nationalist phenomenon, namely the acquisition and plundering of imperial possessions by the putatively modern state. Jonah Siegel thus writes of a “pervasive barbarism at the foundation of the museum,” a history of “violent expropriation” that troubles “a modern world characterized by a drive to increased public access to all culture.”⁸⁴ This founding history of imperial plunder might be read as an instantiation of Derrida’s more theoretical observation that “[t]he gathering into itself of the One is never without violence, nor is . . . the law of *consignation* which orders the archive.”⁸⁵ The need to downplay the spectre of the Yellow Peril militates against an emphasis on Japanese imperialist expansionism, however. That deployment of the aestheticist trope of the Japanese as a people of art provides one means of

avoiding the charge of bellicosity in a general sense. But in order to avoid the more specific charge of expansionism, Okakura cannot merely present the Japanese as artistic; a stronger, more explicit response is called for, one that paints Japan as the very antithesis of a rapacious, putatively imperial power. Okakura thus seeks to replace the trope of the Yellow Peril with a trope of his own making—that of the “White Disaster”: “European imperialism, which does not disdain to raise the absurd cry of the Yellow Peril,” he opines, “fails to realise that Asia may also awaken to the cruel sense of the White Disaster” (*BT*, p. 272). In so doing, he makes an explicit case for Japanese restraint in response to allegations of rapacity, and victimhood in response to allegations of aggression. In this way, the trilogy might also be read as a contribution to an early-twentieth-century narrative of Japanese victimhood.⁸⁶ The process of “consignation” that produces Okakura’s museum is therefore defined not merely by the “excessive pressure (impression, repression, suppression)” that divides the Other from the One, but also by the repression of that very history of repression.

But what happens to the Japanese museum, then? How is it to be founded without imperial plunder? In response to this bind, the trilogy offers a new definition of the museum, one in which the host state is defined not by active rapacity vis-à-vis the treasures of other civilisations but by the very opposite—passive receptivity. This redefinition of the founding impulse of the museum is

particularly apparent in *The Awakening of Japan*, in which the concept of the nation-state as museum is extended to India. Okakura notes that “[i]n Indian society we find the Shamanic as the necessary counterbalance to the Brahmanic ideal, while in China the same positions are held by Taoism and Confucianism” (*AJ*, p. 199). He goes on to argue that “[h]erein lies the secret of that toleration which has made of India a museum of religions, and has caused China to welcome . . . alien faiths” (*AJ*, p. 199). This argument is finally extended to the Japanese museum, in which the religious tolerance of India and China is held to “also explain . . . that attitude of liberalism and apparent indifference which our statesmen of Japan display toward religious questions” (*AJ*, p. 199). Both the Indian museum-state and its Japanese counterpart are thus founded on a principle not of active rapacity, nor of the coerced removal of treasures from a weakened owner but rather of passive openness, of *inactivity*. The curator allows the museum to be penetrated rather than penetrating the site of potential treasures.

The trilogy also employs hydrological metaphors to describe the way in which Asian cultural forms have arrived in Japan and thereby redefine the founding of the museum. The texts depict the arrival of foreign cultural forms as the result of flowing movements, rather than climactic, man-made events. From the very outset of the trilogy, “the history of Japanese art” is presented as a

description of “the beach where each successive wave of Eastern thought has left its sand-ripple as it beat against the national consciousness” (*IE*, p. 16). A particular school of Buddhism is likened to “some great mountain ravine, through which India pours her intellectual torrents upon the world” (*IE*, p. 46). In both cases, the foreign cultural forms preserved in the Japanese museum threaten to overwhelm their housing, to shape it in their image with their “sand-ripple[s],” rather than being shaped by the museum that houses them. The museum is thus defined not merely by passivity, but also by the threat of engulfment, of being “overwhelmed . . . with the wealth of an older culture . . . [that] completely absorbs[s] our aesthetic energy” (*IE*, pp. 21–2). The Japanese museum is saved from engulfment by “a freedom and virility” in “Japanese philosophy and art unknown to India and China,” qualities developed through “the expenditure of thought involved in synthesizing the different elements of Asiatic culture” (*AJ*, p. 250). The need to refute claims of Japanese rapacity thus leads Okakura to place the Japanese museum-state in the position of passive cultural receptacle, a zone of endless syncretism. Paradoxically, this passivity is transmuted into a position of superlative strength in the form of intellectual elasticity. It appears that Okakura can have his cake of cultural pride and eat it too, eliding the history of imperialist rapacity upon which the museum is founded.

One might be tempted to characterise Okakura's calls for the preservation of Japanese culture as nonsensical if such a "culture" is really no more than what Nishida has termed a "place of nothingness" (無の場所—*mu no basho*), if, as Dresser would have it, "the Japanese have invented nothing . . . [but] improved upon everything (*JAAAM*, p. 345). But the trilogy defines culture as something heterogeneous to the concept of a *sui generis* essence. Such a definition more closely anticipates the post-structuralist notion of endless imitation advanced by Roland Barthes half a century later. For Okakura, cultural forms are generated not in purity or isolation, but rather in the interactions between different societies. For this reason, "it was a terrible blow to Buddhaland when Islam interposed a barrier between China and India greater than the Himalayas themselves," for this meant that "the flow of intercourse, so essential to human progress, suddenly stopped" (*AJ*, p. 180). The author's repeated inveighing against the isolationist Tokugawa rulers is unsurprising in this context. "Deprived from all stimulus from without, and imprisoned within our own island realm" under the rule of the shogunate, "we groped amid a maze of tradition" (*AJ*, p. 184). Cultural formation and syncretism are perceived as synonymous here. A lack of foreign contact can only be deathly. To position Japan as an adapter of other cultures, as an exhibiting venue rather than a pure essence, is therefore not to suggest that the country is simply an empty vessel unworthy of preservation.

There are, however, limits to the trilogy's ostensibly universalist notions of culture blending. Asia may be one, but it appears that the West remains, ultimately, a world apart. To be sure, the texts refer to both Western philosophy and constitutional government as newly "inherent" aspects of Japanese life (*AJ*, pp. 236, 241). But these references to the easy incorporation of Western cultural forms appear almost anomalous when juxtaposed with the trilogy's repeated suggestions of the insurmountability of the barrier between Asia and the Anglo-American West. The latter are a particular feature of *The Ideals of the East*, where the Meiji Japanese subject is presented with a choice between "two might chains of forces": "One is the Asiatic ideal, replete with grand visions of the universal sweeping through the concrete and the particular, and the other European science, with her organised culture, armed in all its array of differentiated knowledge" (*IE*, p. 114). This notion of a zero-sum game, a choice of two mutually exclusive alternatives, also appears in the *Awakening of Japan*. In some instances, the text appears to nuance the binaristic view espoused in the *Ideals*, with universalist assertions that "in spite of the seeming demarcation of the East and the West, all human development is fundamentally the same" (*AJ*, p. 251). But once again, such assertions are troubled by what might be termed an "Orientalist mathematics," in which "the glory of the West [or, in the earlier instance, that of Europe] is but the humiliation of Asia" (*AJ*, pp. 216 and 218). The

equations presented in both the *Ideals* and the *Awakening* can only compute if Asia and the West are assumed to be mutually exclusive entities. Universalism and binaristic thinking thus strain against each other in Okakura's trilogy, with the latter appearing to win out.

If we return to the central metaphor of the museum, matters appear rather more complex. The narrative may insist upon an insurmountable barrier between Asia and the West. But its metaphorisation of Japan as a Western institution—Preziosi and Farago call the museum a “remarkable and uncanny European invention”⁸⁷—surely suggests otherwise. (Interestingly, Tomio describes the early-twentieth-century attempt to locate the origins of Western-style expositions in the earlier, Edo-era tradition of trade shows as an attempt to paper over the Western roots of museums and expositions.⁸⁸) In regard to the archive, Derrida notes that the “archival technology no longer determines, will never have determined, merely the moment of the conservational recording,” adding that “[i]t conditions not only the form or the structure that prints, but the printed content of the printing.”⁸⁹ In defining the country as a museum, then—as opposed to a different “archival technology”—the text structures Japan in accordance not only with the concepts of modernity and the nation-state but also in terms of Western epistemologies.

Several of the key planks in the trilogy's conceptual framework appear to be borrowed from Western epistemologies, particularly the then-nascent discipline of art history. One of the most significant borrowings of this kind is the notion of continuous, linear historical periods—a notion born in the museum.⁹⁰ Bharucha describes these temporal categories as “themselves responses to the disciplinary demands and codes of Western art history and curatorial practice.”⁹¹ This notion of successive, seamless historical periods replaced a binaristic Japanese conception of time as existing in two components, the “ancient” and the “present.”⁹² The trilogy's periodisation of Japanese history surely owes much to Okakura's American teacher and mentor, Ernest Fenollosa.⁹³ Okakura's focus on India and China in his narration of these periods might also be read as the reinscription of another Western art historical concept. Carol Duncan writes that the major European museums of the nineteenth century and their American offspring were organized around a conception of art history pioneered at the Louvre—that of the “great civilizations . . . Egypt, Greece and Rome.”⁹⁴ In invoking India and China as the two pillars of Asia and as Japan's artistic forebears (while making no mention of other Asian cultures), Okakura appears to be reproducing this notion of the “great civilizations,” but reproducing it with a difference: the ancient centre of the world has now shifted east. Even as he tweaks the “great civilizations” reading of world history for his own purposes, Okakura leaves intact a concept central to Orientalist imaginative geography—

that of Asia. Naoki Sakai describes “Asia” as a “‘word’ invented by Europeans in order to ‘distinguish Europe from its eastern others.’”⁹⁵ Asia’s “‘defeat,’” its absorption of a sense of itself as Other, Sakai adds, “‘is registered in the genealogy of the name itself.’”⁹⁶ This is not to suggest that Okakura was necessarily unaware of the problematic etymology of the term; Zachmann points out that “[e]ven those who did call themselves Asian, the so-called Asianists, were aware that the formation of Asia derived its existence from Europe.”⁹⁷ In this last regard in particular, Okakura’s assumption of the Western epistemological freight that comes with the institution of the museum speaks to the untenability of the discrete binary of West and Orient.

But we are perhaps missing the forest for the trees. So frequently does the trilogy use the term “art” that one could be forgiven for not interrogating the concept’s genealogy. But the very notion of “art,” particularly as conceived in contradistinction to “craft,” was only introduced into Japan in the 1870s⁹⁸ and only gained currency “outside a narrow circle of government officials” in the 1890s.⁹⁹ Moreover, its introduction was presaged by a need to fit Japanese handmade items (for want of a better term) into the categories dictated by the international exhibition system.¹⁰⁰ Such a system provided a path to recognition of civilised status through art but not through objects deemed craft or curio. As Mark Anderson points out, the categorisation of Japanese goods as “art” was no

mere semantic issue, then. In achieving such a designation, Japan deprived the Western powers of one of the key rationales for refusing to revise the unequal treaties—the notion that the Japanese were uncivilized.¹⁰¹ In this light, Kipling's reading of the Japanese as curios—never “masterpieces” or “works of art”—assumes a new valence. Just as Okakura's trilogy's use of “art” asserts Japan's status as a civilised nation, might the use of the curio in Kipling's narrative suggest the opposite? Problematic as it is, Okakura's use of Western art historical concepts—not least of which is the museum—becomes a plea for parity.

This use of Western epistemologies and taxonomies seems all the more curious in light of the trilogy's stance vis-à-vis taxonomy more generally. The division of concepts into different classes or types is presented as a form of foolhardiness at best, “types . . . after all [being] but shining points of distinctness in an ocean of approximations, false gods deliberately set up to be worshipped, for the sake of mental convenience” (*IE*, p. 14). For Okakura, Westerners are particularly guilty of this form of idolatry, being associated with “science, with her organised culture, armed in all its array of differentiated knowledge” (*IE*, p. 114). Additionally, taxonomy is to be distrusted for its association with the Machine Age, a Western imposition. “To the mind of the average Westerner,” Okakura notes, “it may seem but natural to regard with feelings of unmingled triumph that world of today in which organisation has

made of society a huge machine ministering to its own needs" (*AJ*, p. 214). He cautions, however, that mechanisation is "accompanied by a tendency toward the universal occidentalisation of etiquette and language" (*AJ*, p. 215). In contrast, Asia, "nothing of not spiritual" (*AJ*, p. 203), has "maintained the Eastern notion of human intercourse, not the printed index, as the true means of culture" (*IE*, p. 130). Thus in spite of their central claim for Japan's museum status—and all of its attendant Western epistemological baggage—the texts group together Western thought, the taxonomising impulse, and industrialisation as a complex of forces to be regarded with suspicion.

This simultaneous employment and rejection of Western epistemology also manifests at the level of descriptive language. Many scholars have drawn attention to Okakura's choice to write about Japan predominantly in English.¹⁰² We might equally say that English expresses itself, the world of the nineteenth-century Anglo-American West, through Okakura. This becomes apparent when we consider the trilogy's use of analogies in narrating a history of Japanese art. From the outset, Okakura himself is framed in terms of Western concepts of art appreciation. In her preface to *The Ideals*, Nivedita presents him as "in some sense the William Morris of his country . . . [with] the Nippon Bijutsuin [the art school founded by Okakura] . . . a sort of Japanese Merton Abbey." Here, the use of prevaricatory terms such as "in some sense" and "a sort of" ensure that the

reader cannot forget the provisional, tentative status of such a characterisation. The trilogy is increasingly sparing in its use of such advisory terms, however. The life of the aristocratic figure Yoshitsune simply “recalls the tales of the round table, and is lost, like that of the knight of Pendragon” (*IE*, p. 90). Moreover, Okakura subsequently steps beyond analogy and into the wholesale adoption of Western concepts to categorise Japanese historical periods. “The Ashikaga period [1400–1600] . . . sounds . . . the true note of modern art, Romanticism in its literary sense” (*IE*, p. 93). Similarly, the Unionists of the immediate post-Meiji Restoration period are described as executing a “return . . . to the democratic ideas of ancient China” (*AJ*, p. 234). In both cases Western concepts provide a form of descriptive shorthand for the narration of Japanese history. Unlike in the case of shorthand, however, each symbol—“democracy,” “Romanticism”—serves only to obscure its ultimate referent. That is, the extent to which each Western term actually denotes what is being gestured toward remains unclear.

To varying extents, therefore, the attempt to translate Japanese history into terms explicable to a Western audience has an obscuring effect, rather than one of illumination. It further conceals an already perpetually receding horizon of direct experience of Japan. In this sense, while necessary, Okakura’s use of English might alienate the reader from Japan as much as it renders the country more familiar. Here, we might return to the concept of the translational or

linguistic residue introduced in the study of Dresser's encounter with Japan. To be sure, Okakura's English writing on Japan bears the residue of the Japanese and other Asian concepts it describes—of the tea ceremony, of *advaita*. But it might also be said that it strives for the opposite—that it goes so far in its attempt to make Japan explicable to a Western audience that it risks cleansing the narrative of its Japanese residue and making Japan not so much explicable to a Westerner as Western. As Okakura himself notes in the *Book of Tea*, "translation is always a treason" (*BT*, p. 285). To "translate" the Japanese nation-state into a Western institution may be high treason indeed.

The bind revealed in Okakura's writing was merely the linguistic instantiation of a larger difficulty. Just as he was compelled to use both Western epistemologies and idioms in his trilogy, so too was Okakura was compelled to use tactics ordained by Western Orientalists in order to appeal to Western benefactors in his attempts to preserve Japan's artistic heritage (in part from the onslaught of Western influence). In his years working at the Boston Museum of Fine Arts, Okakura would strike up a friendship with and benefit from the patronage of Isabella Stewart Gardner and her Boston Brahmin social circle.¹⁰³ Gardner shared Okakura's concerns about the Westernisation of Japanese arts, so much so that, as Kristen Thomas details, "she refused to associate with Japanese in America who wore Western dress."¹⁰⁴ As it happened, this dovetailed fairly

neatly with Okakura's earlier abandonment of Western dress. But this still did not make for a simple, symbiotic friendship between the two. Okakura's decision to leave Western dress behind was based on an "understand[ing] that donning Western dress would not gain him respect or equality."¹⁰⁵ Assuming Japanese dress turned out to be no less problematic, however, rendering Okakura a museum piece in the eyes of his Western social companions and "reinforce[ing] . . . the stereotype of Japan as [both] effeminate and an aesthetic fancy."¹⁰⁶

Different as they might seem, both writing in English and donning traditional Japanese dress might be read in similar terms: as gestures that had the effect of obscuring—whether it be Japanese historical events or the thinking subject beneath the exotic garb—in order to appeal to a Western audience.

The necessity and inevitability of display are features not only of Okakura's relationship with Boston's elite but also of his thinking on Asia, specifically his use of the museum metaphor. The museum, after all, is defined, by an emphasis on visibility and accessibility, by the imperative to display.¹⁰⁷ As is the case with the Western epistemologies associated with the museum, Okakura registers a degree of ambivalence about the imperative to display. Specifically, Western modes of display are presented as irredeemably vulgar, inexcusably aggrandising in contrast to those of Japan, an observation also made in Kipling's narrative. This becomes particularly apparent in *The Book of Tea*, in

which “it will be seen that the system of decoration in our tea-rooms is opposed to that which obtains in the West, where the interior of a house is often converted into a museum” (*BT*, p. 302). The Japanese “simplicity of ornamentation” is contrasted with the Western taste for the “mere vulgar display of riches” (*BT*, pp. 302–3). Unlike Kipling’s narrative, however, the trilogy ultimately suggests that display—specifically the display of Japan to a Western audience—is both necessary and desirable, whatever the trade-offs might be. Okakura cannot afford the luxury of Kipling’s paternalistic pleas for concealment. “Any history of Japanese art-ideals is, then, almost an impossibility,” he opines, “as long as the Western world remains so unaware of the varied environment and interrelated social phenomena into which that art is set, as if it were a jewel” (*IE*, p. 17). The implication here appears to be that Western awareness of Japan, the displaying of Japan to the West, is not simply desirable but, on a fundamental level, essential for the production of a history of Japan. And in a very literal sense, Japanese history *was* being produced for a Western audience and artefactualised for display. Japan’s first “state-centered history of [its] . . . art,” a government project initiated “under Tenshin’s [Okakura’s] leadership,” was first published in French and distributed to international visitors at the 1900 Paris Expo. It was not until the following year that the text was translated into and published in Japanese.¹⁰⁸ The trilogy’s emphasis on the need to display Japan’s treasures is

thus fitting given both its use of the museum metaphor and the context in which Japanese art history was being produced at the turn of the century.

The notion of display as desirable also constitutes yet another point of difference between Japan and the rest of Asia. While Japan has wisely entered the light of display, China and India languish in the darkness of a deleterious mystique. Where Kipling presents Japanese engagement with the world in terms of a binary of openness and closure of the cabinet, Okakura employs the concepts of light and darkness. The latter binary is all the more charged for its association with night and ignorance on the hand, and day and awakening or awareness on the other. The connection between light and the opening of Japan to Western arrivals becomes clear when Okakura describes the Japanese decision to allow the foreigners entry as one in which “the Night of Asia fled forever before the rays of the Rising Sun” (*AJ*, p. 220). (The use of the term “Rising Sun” of course also carries the weight of Japanese imperial designs.) Moreover, Japan’s move away from seclusion is repeatedly figured in terms not merely of light but also of display more specifically. The Meiji Restoration is described as the “emerg[ence] . . . from an Asian hermitage to take our stand upon the broad stage of the world” (*AJ*, p. 240), while “Japan might have made a pitiful exhibition of herself” had the last Shogun sided with belligerent, anti-Western elements in Japan’s leadership (*AJ*, p. 224).

That “Night of Asia” is figured as undesirable on two levels. First, it impedes the nation’s ability to see. “Until the moment when we shook it off,” Okakura reflects, “the same lethargy lay upon us which now lies on China and India. Over our country brooded the Night of Asia, enveloping all spontaneity within its mysterious folds” (*AJ*, pp. 177–8). So, with this blindness comes the stagnation of repetition. Second, and perhaps more importantly, darkness also impedes the nation’s capacity to be *seen* by putative Western observers. And in lacking such a capacity, the nation falls victim to the polarized Orientalist discourses such as that of the Yellow Peril. As Okakura notes, “in the mysterious nothing is improbable. Exaggeration is the courtesy which fancy pays to the unknown. What sweeping condemnation, what absurd praise has not the world lavished on New Japan? We are both the cherished child of modern progress and . . . the Yellow Peril itself!” (*AJ*, p. 178). Unfortunately, Westerners writing on Japan rarely “enliven . . . the Oriental darkness with the torch of our own sentiments,” Okakura opines (*BT*, p. 272). Darkness is thus associated with ignorance on the part of both Japan and the West. It is for this reason that, while Kipling worries that opening Japan to the West might lead to its “defilement,” Okakura appears to have deemed such opening essential even in spite of the potential consequences. For good or for ill, the Japanese museum-state must display its wares.

All of this leads us to ask: what exactly does Okakura's writing present for display? The author may describe Japan as a museum of Asia. But what, precisely, are being presented as its exhibits? We have already noted that Okakura was himself treated as an object of display by his Western benefactors and, further, that a similar imperative to display governs the museum. It is perhaps unsurprising, then, that the trilogy's chief exhibit is Okakura himself. Specifically, we are presented with Okakura as synecdoche for the Meiji elite. That elite, in turn, is a synecdoche for all of Japan and its capacity, to use David Sedaris's terminology, to "talk pretty one day," to achieve modern power status. Okakura's status as exhibit is apparent even prior to the opening pages of his narrative, thus making it all the more integral to the text. The first installment in the trilogy, *Ideals of the East*, opens with a "PREFATORY NOTE," in which the reader is informed that "Mr. Murray wishes to point out that this book is written in English by a native of Japan" (IE, p. 4). The use of a combination of block capitals and italics as well as the placement of this note by itself on a single page work to ensure that the text will be noticed. One should also note that the only active verbs in the sentence pertain to the actions of the publisher, Mr. Murray, while Okakura's actions are presented only in passive form. A similar suggestion of passivity appears in the publisher's note to *The Awakening of Japan*, in which "it is proper to state that the present work, like 'The Ideals of the East,' is not a

translation but is written by its Japanese author originally in English" (AJ, p. 175).

In both cases, Okakura's name is also effaced, replaced by definition along primarily racial lines; Okakura becomes merely "a native of Japan" or a "Japanese author."

So, before the reader has even encountered Okakura's own prose, s/he has encountered the author as museum artifact, as English-speaking wonder, with his publisher, John Murray, positioned as curator, "captioning" his exhibit for Western observers. What we have hitherto termed "Okakura's text" therefore displaces its own ostensible author from the position of displaying subject, moving him to that of displayed object. Even if Japan is a modern museum and not a pre-modern cabinet, it appears to house, as Kipling asserts, Japanese exhibits displayed by a Western collector. In this sense, Okakura's putative displacement of a Western discourse of the Asian Other fails before it even is even advanced. Such a failure might be partially attributed to the very nature of exhibition space. With regard to the archive, Derrida observes that "[t]here is no *meta-archive* . . . One will never be able to objectivize it [the archive] with no remainder."¹⁰⁹ Even those who seek to stand as external, analysing subjects—such as Okakura—find themselves trapped within the space housing the objects that they seek to describe. The imperatives of access and visibility governing the museum space extend beyond the ostensible exhibited objects, capturing the

exhibiting subjects. This instability in the position of the observing subject is also apparent in the curio shop when Kipling begins to contemplate his appearance from the position of the Japanese curio dealer, one of those whom the author had hitherto regarded as a curio, an exhibited object. Both Kipling's and Okakura's texts thus speak to the peculiar volatility of the exhibitionary environment, in which the observing subject may become observed object. But unlike Okakura, Kipling is able to reassert his subject status more readily.

As Kipling's panic in the curio shop attests, to experience oneself as exhibited object, rather than exhibiting subject, is to feel a disquieting sense of estrangement from oneself or "difference within," to borrow Barbara Johnson's terminology.¹¹⁰ This brings us to one last attribute of the museum—the estrangement between subject and object. As noted in the previous section, Bal writes that in order to be worthy of collecting, the would-be collectible must be perceived as something completely other by the erstwhile collector. Unlike Kipling, Okakura does not engage in readily identifiable autobiographical reflection in the trilogy. It is thus difficult to gauge the degree to which he experiences self-estrangement. But he does devote extensive discussion to what the text puts forward as Japan's other exhibits—the cultural forms of the rest of Asia, particularly as they have been adapted by Japan. In his repeated employment of the quasi-scientific language of art history, Okakura

suggests a sense of estrangement from the rest of the continent and, by extension, from Japan. Most pointedly, he justifies Japan's claims to museum status with the assertion that "[i]t is in Japan alone that the historic wealth of Asiatic culture can be consecutively studies through its treasured specimens" (*IE*, p. 15). He adds that "[t]he Imperial collection, the Shinto temples, and the opened dolmens, reveal the subtle curves of Hang workmanship" (*IE*, p. 15). Here, objects once used for imperial and religious veneration become instead objects of study, pieces of evidence—"specimens"—that motivate particular classificatory decisions. Similarly, in the case of the *Book of Tea*, Okakura explicitly develops a scholarly system for describing tea ceremony ritual, a form he observes to have been derived from Buddhist traditions. He notes that "[l]ike Art, Tea has its periods and its schools," and that "[i]ts evolution may be roughly divided into three main stages" (*BT*, p. 277). In addition to approaching the tea ceremony in a manner acknowledged to be like that used for the visual arts, Okakura uses his observations about this particular "art" form to draw conclusions about historical phenomena: "[t]hese several methods of appreciating the beverage are indicative of the spirit of the age in which they prevailed" (*BT*, p. 277). Okakura's choice of the museum metaphor—with its requisite estrangement from that which is displayed—is thus perhaps indicative of a sense of distance from the cultures he is describing, one of which is ostensibly his own. This is the distance produced by transculturality, in which, as Wolfgang Welsch writes, "there is no

longer anything absolutely foreign. Everything is within reach. Accordingly there is no longer anything exclusively 'own' either."¹¹¹

This estrangement from his ostensible home was also a feature of Okakura's life beyond the text. Numerous Okakura scholars have written of the author's disillusionment with contemporary Japan, particularly with its modernising and Westernising tendencies. Okakura was one of a number of Meiji-Taisho intellectuals who "seemed to experience the years after the Sino-Japanese War as an era of spiritual crisis."¹¹² His response to this crisis was two-fold. The author looked to both Japan's distant past and to the rest of Asia as refuges from the society from which he had exiled himself. His recourse to temporal and cultural others manifested in what Gath vividly describes as "bizarre dress and and behavior."¹¹³ In bringing ridicule upon him, Okakura's Taoist sage, "Buddhist recluse," and fisherman costumes perhaps only exacerbated their wearer's sense of estrangement from the world around him.¹¹⁴ One might therefore read his sartorial choices as both cause and symptom of his isolation. In his capacity to switch between costumes on a whim, Okakura evoked a generalised, ahistorical Asianness in which differences between different eras and cultures were flattened out. To dress as a monk or a samurai became nothing more than equally valid aesthetic choices. What might be a conscious assertion of pan-Asianist sentiment, then, could instead generate an

equal sense of estrangement from all Asian cultures, whether Japanese or otherwise. Okakura's tendency toward exhibitionary thinking in his use of the museum metaphor might therefore be read as a result of his estrangement from Japan and, indeed, the rest of Asia.

Okakura's curatorial estrangement from Japan is indicative of a much larger phenomenon: a complex of Meiji government practices that had the potential to estrange *all* Japanese from Japaneseness, from the experience of a living system of beliefs continuous with the recent past. His textual creation of a Japanese museum-state is thus by no means an isolated decision. Rather, it is an instantiation of the museum-state that was literally being created by the Meiji government, one of whose most prominent servants was Okakura himself. From the 1870s, the Meiji government put in place a series of measures to survey, classify, and preserve what would come to be termed "national treasures" or *okuho* (国宝). These initiatives included the Tokyo National Museum's decade-long study of "215,000 old documents (*komonjo* 古文書), paintings (*kaiga* 絵画), statues (*chōkoku* 彫刻), decorative arts (*bijutsu kōgei* 美術工芸), and calligraphy (*shoseki* 書跡)," a project that defined not merely categories of art but Japaneseness itself.¹¹⁵ Fenollosa's and Okakura's involvement in the latter project is now well documented.¹¹⁶ Measures were based on the previously discussed assumption

that a modern nation-state had to possess of a long, unique, and visible history.

Unlike in Europe, this state did not, however, need to gather its treasures in a single physical location. Instead, the Meiji government enacted legislation that required temples and shrines to make their relics available for periodic display as national treasures. Religious items were thus ascribed a new art historical significance and ostensibly non-museum space became increasingly museum-like. Another motivating factor in this reclassification was the need to obtain objects that could be exhibited and sold at international exhibitions. The museumising of national space also affected the landscape, which was variously remodeled and reclassified in order to reflect an ancient (and invented) past. For example, in 1891, residents of Sakai prefecture found that an area that they had once been free to enter and use for gathering natural resources had been reclassified as part of the “imperial estate.”¹¹⁷ Such a designation paved the way for the area, described in the ancient text the *Manyōshū* (『万葉集』), to be remodeled to reflect “the world of medieval Japanese poetry.”¹¹⁸ Takagi Hiroshi writes that “[d]uring this period, it was stressed that the increase in visitors due to better maintenance would bring economic benefits and that the forest . . . was a public good as it was a suitable place for westerners to retreat during the hot summer.”¹¹⁹ In effect, the entire national space was rendered potential museum

space with foreigners imagined as possible visitors. With this transformation, everything—or, conversely, nothing—was worthy of posterity, a condition that might deprive national treasures of their aura, and ultimately, history of its meaning. Moreover, functions of both space and objects were redefined in a manner that stood to alienate their Japanese users. Okakura's estrangement from Japaneseness might, therefore, not be unique, given the millions with whom he shared occupancy of the museum-state.¹²⁰

IV

Numerous differences notwithstanding, the use of exhibitionary metaphors in both Kipling's and Okakura's writing constitutes a significant point of similarity between the two groups of texts. It is at this point that we should change tack somewhat and consider the possible reasons for such a similarity. Why would two ostensibly antithetical figures—the one destined to become a key supporter of British imperialism and the other writing in opposition to that expansionist project—both equate national space with exhibition space? And why, in writing in terms of the exhibitionary, would both authors find themselves so vulnerable to transformation from exhibiting subject into exhibited object?

I shall address the latter question first. We might attribute the unstable racial positioning of both Kipling and Okakura to the particular circumstances of their upbringing. We have already considered Kipling's biography in this regard, but it is also worth examining that of Okakura. The author is perhaps the quintessential Japanglian subject. Born in 1862 in Yokohama, a treaty port that Sung describes as a "small 'foreign country' within Japan," Okakura's was the son of a samurai-turned-merchant.¹²¹ His father ensured that Okakura was educated in English by American missionaries as early as the age of six. This English education continued at Tokyo's Kaisei Gakkō, which would become Tokyo University in 1877. The university, Anderson writes, "was an institution organized entirely within the confines of Western learning," with a "largely foreign" faculty.¹²² It was there that Okakura's superlative English proficiency would lead to a creative collaboration with Ernest Fenollosa, the American scholar who would influence the development of some of his (ostensibly) most stridently nativist ideas about Japanese art and with whom he would travel to Europe and the United States to learn Western curatorial techniques.¹²³ It is important to remember that Okakura's education in Western thought was accompanied by a grounding in Japanese and Chinese scholarship, so that he might more accurately be described as cosmopolitan rather than simply Westernised.¹²⁴ That said, it appears that the English language and Western ideas dominated the author's thinking; as Tankha notes, "his English education led to

the neglect of his Japanese[,] which never quite reached the same level.”¹²⁵

Recalling Kipling’s “halting” boyhood use of English, it would seem that both writers were never truly at home in what were supposed to be their native languages. This leads one to question which of the pair was the Westerner. Was it Kipling, English by blood but not by birth or language? Or was it Okakura, a native speaker of English, but someone who was neither identified as nor considered himself (at least consciously) Western? The answer, of course, is “both” and “neither.” But the very fact that the question emerges is indicative of the extent to which the authors’ shared liminality troubles conventional assumptions about otherness, about subject and object when refracted through the exhibitionary prism.

The authors’ common background in Western(ised) educational systems is also worthy of further consideration. Their common concern with placing Japan in an international hierarchy is attributable not merely to similarities in their individual biographies but also to a shared intellectual climate. In short, both were singing from the same scholarly hymnbook. The network that I have termed “Japanglia” was defined by the exchange of both material goods (as detailed in the first two chapters) and ideas. In the latter regard, both Sandra Wilson and Nagai Michio write of the prominence of Social Darwinism in late-nineteenth-century Japanese thought. Nagai Michio describes Herbert Spencer, a

key proponent of this philosophy, as “the most widely read and possibly the most influential Western social and political thinker in Japan during the 1880s.”¹²⁶ Reflecting such prominence, “modern Japan . . .” exhibited an “apparent obsession with ranking itself in the world.”¹²⁷ With this came a notion that Japan could provide a guiding light for the rest of Asia in its transition to civilized status.¹²⁸ This latter idea manifests in Okakura’s conception of Japan as the pinnacle of Asian civilisation and also closely resembles Kipling’s own Social Darwinist “white man’s burden.”

In the century’s highly popular international exhibitions, the influence of Social Darwinism would be felt in the shift in classificatory rationales from “stages of production” to “nations and the supra-national constructs of empires and races,” from industry to anthropology.¹²⁹ Once it took control of its representation at these exhibitions, the Meiji government would use these events to highlight Japanese modernity relative to the backwardness of its others, such as the Ainu, a move that replicated European and American tactics in the same domain.¹³⁰ While Okakura was both a visitor to and participant in such exhibitions, Kipling’s position in regard to them is less clear. Nevertheless, much of Kipling’s writing might be read as what Reinaldo Silva terms a “respon[se] . . . to the late nineteenth-century discourse fostered by Social Darwinism.”¹³¹ As Silva goes on to note, “Kipling was writing in the heyday of Social Darwinism

and, obviously, this ideology shaped him.”¹³² Both authors, then, were profoundly influenced by an intellectual climate defined by both Social Darwinism specifically and a belief in racial hierarchies more generally. Following from this, the possibility of enunciating an unequivocal rhetoric of Japanese resistance to Western imperialist thinking starts to appear increasingly improbable.

That possibility appears even more unlikely when one considers those international exhibitions as part of a much larger phenomenon—what Timothy Mitchell terms the “exhibitionary order.” It is this Orientalist exhibitionary order that, I argue, accounts for the most fundamental congruence between Kipling’s and Okakura’s writing: their conception of Japan in exhibitionary terms. Mitchell describes a phenomenon in which the Western world was

itself being ordered up as an endless exhibition. This world-as-exhibition was a place where the artificial, the model, and the plan were employed to generate an unprecedented effect of order and certainty. It is not the artificiality of the exhibitionary order that matters, however, so much as the contrasting effect of an external reality that the artificial and the model create—a reality

characterized by Orientalism's Orient, by essentialism, otherness, and absence . . .

Everything seemed to be set up before one as though it were the model or the picture of something. Everything was arranged before an observing subject into a system of signification, declaring itself to be a mere object, a mere 'signifier' of something further.¹³³

Mitchell observes this nineteenth-century arrangement of the "world-as-exhibition" far beyond official museum space, in shops and arcades, parks, and streetscapes.¹³⁴ Western travelers "who 'left' the exhibition" and ventured to the Middle East thus believed that they were encountering the referent and not the picture, the signified and not the signifier.¹³⁵ But these travelers also found themselves disoriented by a world not set up for viewing. The world around them would therefore have to be reconfigured for display.¹³⁶ In this light, Kipling's satisfaction upon ascending the hill after the disorienting encounter in the curio shop assumes a new significance as the fulfillment of a need to view the world in distant, pictorial terms. The concept of the "exhibitionary order" illuminates both this moment and Kipling's and Okakura's conceptions of Japan more generally. Whatever their differences (and these are not unimportant), Kipling, raised in both England and India as a member of the observing, Sahib class, and Okakura, educated by Westerners and living in both Tokyo and

Boston, are together high priests of this exhibitionary order. Both imagine Japan in exhibitionary terms because they have been inculcated with this powerful mode of comprehending the world.

V

Do Okakura's education in Western thought and residence in the United States condemn him, then, to a form of critical repetition compulsion? Can he only grope about in the same darkness of Eurocentric Social Darwinism and Orientalism, of a world set up for the Western observer, that he seeks to critique? There are at least two ways to address this question, both of which answer it in the negative. That is, Okakura is not doomed to repetition compulsion. In the first place, even when a non-Western intellectual adopts a concept with roots in a Western discourse, s/he does not leave the concept unaltered. As Homi Bhabha has noted in his enunciation of the notion of "colonial mimicry," repetition always occurs with a difference, potentially a subversive one.¹³⁷ Christina Kreps makes a similar observation regarding regional museums in Indonesia, where European curatorial practices have been reinterpreted via local belief systems.¹³⁸ James Robson also observes such alterations "on the ground" in visitors' reception of religious objects in Japanese museums.¹³⁹

While not untrue, this first answer carries an assumption that bears some interrogation, however. Namely, it takes for granted the notion that a phenomenon or epistemology identified with Western modernity can *only* be Western (and, for that matter, modern). As a second answer to this question of critical repetition compulsion, one might suggest that a number of the concepts that this chapter has hitherto ascribed to Western modernity might equally be attributed to a Japanese brand of modernity that predates sustained, significant contact with Western powers. Chief among these would be the development of art-historical thinking and the beginnings of the nation-state. I have termed these coincidental similarities, while those arising as a result of that previously discussed network of exchange constitute contact-based similarities. In both cases, the result is the same: one is unable to affix the designations “Japanese” and “Western” / “Anglo” with any veracity.

With regard to art history, Christine Guth offers a corrective to the assumption that pre-Meiji Japan was something of a *tabula rasa*. Guth writes that the criteria for the selection of National Treasures (*kokuhō* 国宝) had their roots in both nineteenth-century European “academic historicism” and the antiquarianism of the National Studies (*kokugaku* 国学) school of scholarship.¹⁴⁰ Both European and Japanese government officials of this period laid stress on technical virtuosity over originality of expression.¹⁴¹ Moreover, the surveys of

treasures described in the previous section were by no means unprecedented. As early as the 1790s, such surveys were being conducted under the authority of the shogun.¹⁴² Guth thus argues for the existence of a “strong art historical consciousness foreshadowing that of the Meiji era.”¹⁴³ While the Meiji period may have brought with it a new level of estrangement from Japaneseness, the epistemology of critical distance constituted by European art history was not necessarily revolutionary in the Japanese context. Okakura’s adoption of such an epistemology is therefore not necessarily a Westernising move, either.

Finally, and just as significantly, the concept of the nation-state, like art-historical epistemology, has roots in both European and Japanese brands of modernity. Most notably, Mitani Hiroshi writes of the development of a “protonation-state” in early modern Japan.¹⁴⁴ In a similar vein, Marius Jansen locates the origins of the related phenomenon of Japanese expansionism not in a late-nineteenth-century tendency toward colonial mimicry but rather in the debates of prominent Tokugawa intellectuals such as Satō Nobuhiro and Yoshida Shōin, “who had been writing of the possibility of taking control of the Manchu lands of northeast China.”¹⁴⁵ Jansen adds that “even if one considers it rhetoric, such talk should not be dismissed; for it points to the northeast continent as the logical goal for Japanese expansion,” a goal, we might add, that was ultimately realized with the early-twentieth-century formation of the

Japanese puppet-state of Manchukuo.¹⁴⁶ Okakura's stressing of the pre-Meiji national status of Japan and of the nationalist teleology of Japanese history might be exaggerated somewhat, but it is by no means a mere echoing of the rhetoric of Western nationalism. He may find himself in the museum-state, but that site is no more purely Western than it is Japanese.

¹ Rudyard Kipling, *Kipling's Japan: Collected Writings*, ed. Hugh Cortazzi and George Webb (London and Atlantic Highlands NJ: Athlone, 1988), p. . All subsequent references to the letters are to this edition and will appear parenthetically in the text by page number.

² Okakura Kakuzō (also known as Okakura Tenshin), *The Ideals of the East in Collected English Writings*, ed. Nakamura Sunao, 3 vols. (Tokyo: Heibonsha, 1984), 1:3–132, 16. All subsequent references to texts in the trilogy are to this edition and will appear parenthetically in the body of the chapter. As the entire trilogy appears in volume one, references will be to page numbers only. *The Ideals of the East* will be abbreviated as *IE*, *The Awakening of Japan* (1:169–264) as *AJ*, and *The Book of Tea* (1:265–326) as *BT*.

³ For example, one finds references to but no sustained interrogation of the museum metaphor in the following: Sung Hae-Kyung, "Return to Japan—The Case of Okakura Tenshin," in *Return to Japan from "Pilgrimage" to the West*, ed. Nagashima Yoichi (Aarhus, Denmark: Aarhus Univ. Press), pp. 82–100; Mark Anderson, "National Literature as Cultural Monument: Instituting the Japanese National Community," in *New Directions in the Study of Meiji Japan*, ed. Helen Hardacre and Adam L. Kern (Leiden and New York: Brill, 1997), pp. 45–59; and Karatani Kōjin, trans. Sabu Kohso, "Japan as Museum: Okakura Tenshin and Ernest Fenollosa," in *Japanese Art after 1945: Scream Against the Sky*, ed. Alexandra Munroe (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1994), pp. 33–9.

⁴ Rustom Bharucha, *Another Asia: Rabindranath Tagore and Okakura Tenshin* (New Delhi: Oxford Univ. Press, 2006), p. 19.

⁵ Matthew Mizenko, "'In a Borrowed Tongue': The Representation of Japan in the English Language by Nitobe, Okakura and Uchimura," *Acts of Writing* 2, ? (Summer 2001): 120–37, 120.

⁶ Brij Tankha, "Writing a Good History upon a Modern Plan," in *Okakura Tenshin and Pan-Asianism: Shadows of the Past*, ed. Tankha (Kent UK: Global Oriental, 2009), pp. 27–48, 31.

⁷ Midori Wakakuwa, "Japanese Cultural Identity and Nineteenth-Century Asian Nationalism: Okakura Tenshin and Swami Vivekananda," in *Okakura Tenshin and Pan-Asianism*, pp. 22–6, 23.

⁸ Sung, pp. 38–9.

⁹ Kristen Thomas provides a brief but comprehensive biographical sketch in "Okakura Tenshin and the Art of Lying," *Wittenberg University East Asian Studies Journal* 33, ? (Spring 2008): 55–63. See especially p. 56.

¹⁰ Tankha, p. 28.

¹¹ For example, in his summary of the early years of Kipling's career in his preface to *Kipling Considered*, Phillip Mallett refers to the young author's travels in the United States, Hong Kong, and Singapore but makes no reference to the time spent in Japan in 1889 (Phillip Mallett, *Kipling Considered* [New York: St. Martin's, 1989]).

¹² George Orwell, "Rudyard Kipling." 06/20/07. <http://george-orwell.org/Rudyard_Kipling/0.html>. p. 1.

¹³ Ozawa Shizen, "Representing Empire: A Reading of 'From Tideway to Tideway,'" *Comparative Literature Studies* 39 (2002): 293–304, 293–4.

¹⁴ In this sense, my writing is of a piece with Urs Matthias Zachmann's attempt to complicate the presentation of pan-Asianism as the antithesis of Western imperialist thinking (Urs Matthias Zachmann, "Blowing Up a Double Portrait in Black and White: The Concept of Asia in the Writings of Fukuzawa Yukichi and Okakura Tenshin," *positions* 15, 2 (Spring 2007): 345–68, 346).

¹⁵ George Webb, "Introduction Two: Rudyard Kipling," in *Kipling's Japan*, p. 12.

¹⁶ Marie-Therese Barrett, "Japonaiserie to Japonisme: A Revolution in Seeing," *The Transactions of the Asiatic Society in Japan* 14 (1999): 77–85, 79.

¹⁷ Cynthia Brandimarte, "Japanese Novelty Stores," *Winterthur Portfolio* 26, 1 (Spring 1991): 1–25, 1–2.

¹⁸ Kurata Yoshihiro, 『1885年ロンドン日本人村』 / *1885-nen Rondon Nihonjin Mura* [*The London Japanese Village of 1885*] (Tokyo: Asahi Shinbunsha, 1983), p. 73.

¹⁹ Stephen W. Sears, *Gilbert and Sullivan and Their Victorian World* (New York: American Heritage, 1976), pp. 173–4.

²⁰ For more detailed accounts of the history of cabinets of curiosities, see Arthur K. Wheelock, Jr. *A Collector's Cabinet* (Washington: National Gallery of Art, 1998) and David K. van Keuren, "Cabinets and Culture: Victorian Anthropology and the Museum Context," *Journal of the History of the Behavioral Sciences* 25 (1989): 26–39.

²¹ Wheelock, p. 45.

²² Shirley Teresa Wajda, "'And A Little Child Shall Lead Them': Children's Cabinets of Curiosities, 1790–1860," *Reader* 38–9 (1997–98): 5–19, 5.

²³See also the website of the New York Public Library, which contains information for an exhibition of cabinets:

<<http://www.nypl.org/research/chss/events/curiosities.htm>>.

²⁴Susan Stewart, *On Longing: Narratives of the Miniature, the Gigantic, the Souvenir, the Collection* (Durham NC and London: Duke Univ. Press, 1993), p. 57.

²⁵Yokoyama Toshio, *Japan in the Victorian Mind* (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire UK: Macmillan, 1983), p. 150.

²⁶Stewart, p. 158.

²⁷For a different take on Kipling's aestheticisation of the Japanese, see Harry Ricketts, "A Short Walk on the Wilde Side: Kipling's First Impressions on Japan," *PN Review* 29 (2003): 7–10..

²⁸James H. Bunn, "The Aesthetics of British Mercantilism," *NLH* 11 (1980): 303–21, 304.

²⁹Mieke Bal, "Telling Objects: A Narrative Perspective on Collecting," in *The Cultures of Collecting*, ed. Roger Cardinal and John Elsner (Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 1994), pp. 97–115, p. 110–1.

³⁰Morita Yuzo, "Estimated Birth and Death Rates in the Early Meiji Period of Japan," *Population Studies* 17 (1963): 33–56.

³¹Rotem Kowner, "'Lighter than Yellow, But Not Enough': Western Discourse on the Japanese 'Race', 1854–1904," *The Historical Journal* 43 (2000): 103–31, 111.

³²Isabella Bird, *Unbeaten Tracks in Japan* (1880; rpt. London: Virago, 1984), p. 282.

³³Yokoyama, p. 159.

³⁴For a more detailed discussion of the linkages between miniaturisation, portability and commodification in terms of Victorian travel, see Ellen Strain, "Exotic Bodies, Distant Landscapes: Touristic Viewing and Popularized Anthropology in the Nineteenth Century," *Wide Angle* 18 (1996): 70–100..

³⁵Gaston Bachelard, *The Poetics of Space*, trans. Maria Jolas (New York: Orion, 1964), p. 150.

³⁶Steven Millhauser, "The Fascination of the Miniature," *Grand Street* 2 (1983): 128–35, 133.

³⁷Bal, p. 104.

³⁸Bal, p. 105.

³⁹See, for example, Ina Schabert, "Bourgeois Counter-Art: Dolls in Victorian Culture," *Journal of the Study of British Cultures* 8 (2001): 121–35..

⁴⁰Kowner, p. 103.

⁴¹Gail Ching-Liang Low, *White Skins/Black Masks: Representation and Colonialism* (London: Routledge, 1996), p. 7.

⁴²Kipling, *Something of Myself and Other Autobiographical Writings*, ed. Thomas Pinney (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1991), p. 4.

⁴³ Interestingly, Ozawa makes the opposite point about the letters from Kipling's second trip to Japan, noting that the narrator creates "an impression of authoritative, "objective" distance in this subsequent set of correspondence.

⁴⁴ Bachelard, p. 172.

⁴⁵ Bachelard, p. 172.

⁴⁶ Stewart, p. 86.

⁴⁷ I question Donald Richie's assertion that Kipling "was never seduced by the picturesque" during his travels in Japan. Richie's claim that Kipling "saw that . . . Japan is not a small country, a miniature civilisation" is similarly problematic (see Donald Richie, "Rudyard Kipling in Japan," *Japan Quarterly* 9 (1962): 293–9).

⁴⁸ Hugh Cortazzi, "The British in Japan in the Nineteenth Century" in *Britain and Japan*, ed. Tomoko Sato and Toshio Watanabe (London: Lund Humphries, 1991), pp. 58–9.

⁴⁹ Wajda, pp. 6–7.

⁵⁰ Wheelock, p. 17.

⁵¹ Bunn, p. 306.

⁵² Wheelock, p. 20.

⁵³ Thad Logan, *The Victorian Parlour* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2001), p. 194.

⁵⁴ van Keuren, p. 32.

⁵⁵ Louis G. Perez, "Revision of the Unequal Treaties and the Abolition of Extraterritoriality," in *New Directions in the Study of Meiji Japan*, ed. Helen Hardacre and Adam L. Kern (Leiden and New York: Brill, 1997), pp. 320–34.

⁵⁶ Sandra Wilson, "The Discourse of National Greatness in Japan, 1890–1919," *Japanese Studies* 25, 1 (May 2005): 35–51.

⁵⁷ Christine M. E. Guth, "Some Reflections on the Formation of the Meiji Artistic Canon," in *New Directions in the Study of Meiji Japan*, ed. Helen Hardacre and Adam L. Kern (Leiden and New York: Brill, 1997), pp. 35–41, 40.

⁵⁸ Karatani Kōjin, trans. Sabu Kohso, "Japan as Museum: Okakura Tenshin and Ernest Fenollosa," in *Japanese Art after 1945: Scream Against the Sky*, ed. Alexandra Munroe (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1994), pp. 33–9, 37.

⁵⁹ Tankha, p. 35.

⁶⁰ Tony Bennett, "The Exhibitionary Complex" in *Grasping the World: The Idea of the Museum*, ed. Donald Preziosi and Claire Farago (Aldershot UK: Ashgate, 2004), pp. 413–39, 434.

⁶¹ Carol Ann Christ, "'The Sole Guardians of the Art Inheritance of Asia': Japan and China at the 1904 St. Louis World's Fair," *positions* 8, 3 (Winter 2000): 675–709, 682–3.

⁶² Timothy Mitchell, "Orientalism and the Exhibitionary Order" in *Grasping the World*, pp. 442–59, 452.

⁶³ Mitchell, p. 452.

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- ⁶⁴ Mitchell, p. 454.
- ⁶⁵ Jacques Derrida, *Archive Fever: A Freudian Impression*, trans. Eric Prenowitz (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1996), pp. 11–2.
- ⁶⁶ Bennett, pp. 426–7
- ⁶⁷ Carol Duncan, “From the Princely Gallery to the Public Art Museum: The Louvre Museum and the National Gallery, London,” in *Grasping the World*, pp. 250–77, 256 and 258.
- ⁶⁸ Mitchell, p. 447.
- ⁶⁹ Christina F. Kreps makes a similar observation regarding Indonesian regional museums. See *Liberating Culture: Cross-Cultural Perspectives on Museums, Curation, and Heritage Preservation* (London and New York: Routledge, 2003), pp. 25–6.
- ⁷⁰ Tomio Kentaro, “Visions of Modern Space: Expositions and Museums in Meiji Japan,” in *New Directions in the Study of Meiji Japan*, ed. Helen Hardacre and Adam L. Kern (Leiden and New York: Brill, 1997), pp. 719–33, 732.
- ⁷¹ Tomio, p. 732.
- ⁷² For more on subnational allegiances, see Jeffrey L. Hanes, “Contesting Centralization? Space, Time, and Hegemony in Meiji Japan,” in *New Directions in the Study of Meiji Japan*, pp. 485–95.
- ⁷³ Wilson, p. 45.
- ⁷⁴ Bharucha, p. 19.
- ⁷⁵ Kim Jin-Ha. “Origins of the Family State: Japanese Colonial (1910–1945) Legacies for the Construction of the North Korean Conscription Society” *Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Political Science Association, Hyatt Regency Chicago and the Sheraton Chicago Hotel and Towers, Chicago, IL, Aug 30, 2007* <http://www.allacademic.com/meta/p210083_index.html>
- ⁷⁶ Elisabetta Porcu, *Pure Land Buddhism in Modern Japanese Culture* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2008), p. 38.
- ⁷⁷ Karatani Kōjin and Sabu Kohso, “Uses of Aesthetics: After Orientalism,” *boundary 2* 25, 2 (Summer 1998): 145–60, 146.
- ⁷⁸ Karatani and Kohso, “Uses,” p. 147.
- ⁷⁹ Karatani and Kohso, “Uses,” p. 153.
- ⁸⁰ Zachmann, p. 357.
- ⁸¹ Okakura qtd. in Miya Elise Mizuta, “‘Fair Japan’: On Art and War at the Saint Louis World’s Fair, 1904,” *Discourse* 28, 1 (2006): 28–52, 41–2.
- ⁸² Karatani and Kohso, “Uses,” p. 156.
- ⁸³ Mizuta, pp. 32–3.
- ⁸⁴ Jonah Siegel, “Owning Art after Napoléon: Destiny or Destination at the Birth of the Museum,” *PMLA* 125, 1 (2010): 142–51, 142 and 145.
- ⁸⁵ Derrida, pp. 77–8, emphasis original.
- ⁸⁶ Wilson, p. 49.

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- ⁸⁷ Preziosi and Farago, "General Introduction: What are Museums For?" in *Grasping the World*, pp. 1–10, 3.
- ⁸⁸ Tomio, pp. 724–5.
- ⁸⁹ Derrida, p. 18.
- ⁹⁰ Bharucha, pp. 20–1.
- ⁹¹ Bharucha, p. 22.
- ⁹² Takagi Hiroshi, "The Meiji Restoration and the Revival of Ancient Scholarship" in *Perspectives on Social Memory in Japan*, ed. Tsu Yun Hui, Jan van Bremen, and Eyal Ben-Ari (Kent UK: Global Oriental 2005): 134–47, 143.
- ⁹³ Karatani, "Japan as Museum," p. 33.
- ⁹⁴ Duncan, p. 261.
- ⁹⁵ Sakai qtd. in Bharucha, p. 12.
- ⁹⁶ Ibid.
- ⁹⁷ Zachmann, pp. 347–8.
- ⁹⁸ Bharucha, p. 22.
- ⁹⁹ Guth, "Some Reflections," p. 36.
- ¹⁰⁰ Bharucha, p. 22.
- ¹⁰¹ Mark Anderson, "National Literature as Cultural Monument: Instituting the Japanese National Community," in *New Directions in the Study of Meiji Japan*, ed. Helen Hardacre and Adam L. Kern (Leiden and New York: Brill, 1997), pp. 45–59, 49.
- ¹⁰² See, for example, Tankha, p. 42; and Mizenko.
- ¹⁰³ Mizenko, p. 126.
- ¹⁰⁴ Kristen Thomas, "Okakura Tenshin and the Art of Lying," *Wittenberg University East Asian Studies Journal* 33, ? (Spring 2008): 55–63, 59.
- ¹⁰⁵ Guth, "Charles Longfellow and Okakura Kakuzō: Cultural Cross-Dressing in the Colonial Context," *positions* 8, 3 (Winter 2000): 605–36, 613.
- ¹⁰⁶ Guth, "Cross-Dressing," pp. 624–5.
- ¹⁰⁷ For this reason, it is important not to overstate the overlap between museums and archives, with the latter not being governed by such an imperative and being more likely to restrict access and/or visibility. For more on museums and visibility, see Bennett.
- ¹⁰⁸ Takagi, p. 145.
- ¹⁰⁹ Derrida, pp. 67–8.
- ¹¹⁰ Barbara Johnson, *The Critical Difference: Essays in the Contemporary Rhetoric of Reading* (Baltimore MD: Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 1980), p. 4.
- ¹¹¹ Wolfgang Welsch, "Transculturality: The Puzzling Form of Cultures Today," in *Spaces of Culture: City, Nation, World*, ed. Mike Featherstone and Scott Lash (London: Sage, 1999), pp. 194–213, 198.
- ¹¹² Zachmann, p. 360.
- ¹¹³ Guth, "Cross-Dressing," pp. 625–6.

¹¹⁴ Ibid.

¹¹⁵ Christine M. E. Guth, "Kokuhō: From Dynastic to Artistic Treasure," *Cahiers d'Extrême-Asie* 9 (1996–1997): 313–22, 318.

¹¹⁶ For example, see Guth, "Kokuhō" and Takagi.

¹¹⁷ Takagi, p. 140.

¹¹⁸ Ibid.

¹¹⁹ Ibid.

¹²⁰ Writing in more general terms, Stefan Tanaka hits upon this issue: "Our tendency to treat aesthetics as traditional, unromantic, even backward, elides a fundamental contradiction that confronts non-Western cultures as they form nation-states: the building of a modern society requires that non-Western places forget their past in favor of alien (modern) institutions and ideas, yet that past must be celebrated to establish the commonality and goals of the nation-state distinct from others. The elision occurs in the reconstitution of the past according to a different epistemology and centralized authority that guide the rearrangement of time and space from a community-centered social organization to an abstract notion that objectifies the components as part of a rational order" (Stefan Tanaka, "Imaging History: Inspiring Belief in the Nation," *Journal of Asian Studies* 52, 1 [February 1994]: 24–44, 25.)

¹²¹ Sung, p. 84.

¹²² Anderson, p. 47.

¹²³ Tankha, p. 29; Karatani, "Japan as Museum," p. 33.

¹²⁴ Sung, p. 84.

¹²⁵ Tankha, p. 29.

¹²⁶ Nagai Michio, "Herbert Spencer in Early Meiji Japan," *Far Eastern Quarterly* 14, 1 (November 1954): 55–64, 55.

¹²⁷ Wilson, p. 37.

¹²⁸ Ibid.

¹²⁹ Bennett, p. 433. See also Mizuta, p. 38.

¹³⁰ Christ, "Sole Guardians," pp. 688–9.

¹³¹ Reinaldo Francisco Silva, "Social Darwinism, Race, and the Discourse of Empire in Kipling's Captains Courageous," *Excavatio: Nouvelle Revue Emile Zola et Naturalisme International* 19, 1–2 (2004): 223–35, 231.

¹³² Silva, p. 233.

¹³³ Mitchell, pp. 443 and 447.

¹³⁴ Mitchell, p. 443.

¹³⁵ Mitchell, p. 455.

¹³⁶ Mitchell, p. 456.

¹³⁷ See Homi K. Bhabha, "Of Mimicry and Man," in Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (New York: Routledge, 1990), pp. 85–92.

¹³⁸ See especially chap. 2, "The Eurocentric Museum Model in the Non-European World," pp. 20–45.

¹³⁹ James Robson, "Faith in Museums: On the Confluence of Museums and Religious Sites in Asia," *PMLA* 125, 1 (2010): 121–8.

¹⁴⁰ Guth, "Kokuhō," p. 319.

¹⁴¹ Guth, "Kokuhō," p. 320.

¹⁴² Guth, "Kokuhō," p. 319.

¹⁴³ Guth, "Kokuhō," p. 319.

¹⁴⁴ Mitani Hiroshi, "A Protonation-State and its 'Unforgettable Other': The Prerequisites for Meiji International Relations," in *New Directions in the Study of Meiji Japan*, pp. 293–310.

¹⁴⁵ Marius B. Jansen, "Japan and the World," in *New Directions in the Study of Meiji Japan*, pp. 285–92, 286.

¹⁴⁶ Jansen, pp. 286–7.

Chapter Four

"Returned to My Original State":

The Somatics of Anglo-Japanese Engagement in Marie Stopes's Japan Writings

At some point in 1906, a young Marie Stopes visited a "lady doctor" to discuss matters related to childbearing.¹ By 1918, she would be internationally famous as a birth control campaigner and the author of the best-selling sex manual *Married Love*.² But in 1906, she was still in the early stages of a promising career as a palaeobotanist, and her concerns related not to the national gains offered by happy heterosexual alliances but rather to the horrors that might result from an interracial union with her Japanese fiancée. Stopes was relieved when the doctor "laughed at my fears and set us right, and told us there was no reason to fear dreadful things because we were of different nationalities" (*LL*, from *MM*, London, November 20, p. 321).

Three years earlier, upon completion of her studies at University College London, Stopes had left England for a year of further study in Munich.³ Working in a laboratory there, she had met Fujii Kenjirō, a Japanese scientist fourteen years her senior.⁴ The pair developed a secret attraction, overcoming Stopes's "strong, British dislike of any thought of love between an English woman and a foreigner" (*LL*, p. 32). When Stopes left Munich to take up a lectureship at

Manchester University in 1904, Fujii followed her to England, continuing his research in London.⁵ Spending time together in London in 1905, the pair became secretly betrothed. With Fujii compelled to return to his academic post at Tokyo Imperial University, Stopes saw to it that she became the first woman to obtain a Royal Society grant.⁶ Her passage and living costs covered, she sailed for Japan in June 1907, ready to begin work alongside Fujii at the university's Botanical Institute.⁷ In the time preceding her arrival in Japan, she and Fujii had exchanged a volley of amorous missives. Shortly before her arrival, Fujii's responses to Stopes's letters became increasingly infrequent. He was not there to meet her at the dock in Yokohama. At their first meeting in Japan, he ended the affair, urging her in some of their last letters from this time to "marry some nice Englishman" and claiming to have contracted leprosy (*LL*, from *KW*, Tokio, September 28, pp. 345-6). In the conjunction of these two responses, the relationship between a retreat from Japanglian engagement and corporeal contact becomes apparent.

In this chapter, I want to explore this relationship between corporeality and transnationalism as it is presented in the three texts that come out of Stopes's time in Japan. The love letters exchanged between Fujii and Stopes are by no means confined to the archives. Rather, in what can only be imagined as a prolonged fit of pique, Stopes published them under a collection of pseudonyms (more on that later) in 1911, two years after her return from Japan. *Love Letters of*

a Japanese, a second edition of which appeared in 1921, contains hundreds of pages of correspondence that passed between the two.⁸ Perhaps more interestingly, the volume also includes a series of prefatory materials, all of which are written by Stopes herself but are credited variously to an ostensible editor, "G. N. Mortlake," and an outside expert in Anglo-Japanese marriages, "M. C. Stopes." The two lovers become "Mertyl Meredith" (Stopes) and "Kenrio Watanabe" (Fujii).⁹ (I will simply refer to the letter-writers as Stopes and Fujii for the sake of clarity.) A year before publishing *Love Letters*, Stopes compiled the journal entries that she had written in Japan and circulated among friends and family, and published them as *A Journal from Japan: A Daily Record of Life as Seen by a Scientist* (hereafter *JJ*).¹⁰ Around this time, she was also collaborating with another Japanese scientist, Prof. Sakurai Jōji, on a volume of commentary on and translations of Japanese Noh drama. This would be published in 1913 as *Plays of Old Japan: The Noh* (hereafter *POJN*).¹¹

Taken together, *Love Letters* and *Plays of Old Japan* present us with a case study of the limits and persistence of Japanglian engagement. In both texts, such engagement is both undermined and perpetuated by the corporeal. Undermined insofar as the body is consistently presented as the site upon which Japanglian relationships come undone; perpetuated insofar as Japanglian engagement is permanently inscribed on the bodies of those involved in it. Just as the traffic in

both ideas and art objects produced a blurring of English and Japanese cultural elements, Stopes and Fujii experience a corporeal form of Japanglian blurring. *Journal from Japan*, published without the cover of either pseudonymity or scholarly probity and therefore less revealing in this regard, will be of use here primarily for its factual content.

Despite the significance of Stopes's Japan writings for scholars of both the early-twentieth-century birth control campaigner's work and Anglo-Japanese encounters, very little has been written on this body of work. As Carmen Blacker notes (in one of the few studies to subject Stopes's Japanese experiences to any level of analysis), the Englishwoman's "connection with Japan has been overshadowed by the drama of her later life."¹² And yet, as Blacker adds and as Stopes's experience with the "lady doctor" might suggest, "[i]t is arguable ... that without these earlier 'Japanese' events, her attention might never have turned to the field of birth control."¹³ Similarly, Christina Hauck notes that "[d]espite the plethora of biographical information very little critical attention has been paid to Stopes's literary output."¹⁴ With these scholarly lacunae in mind, I consider the ways in which a study of Stopes's Japan writings might be of significance to students of her life and work. In the subsequent section, I examine the distinctly Japanglian characteristics of both *LL* and *POJN*. Having established this foundation, I am then able to consider the ways in which Japanglian

engagements are presented as foundering upon the rocks of corporeality. In addition to the narration of the dissolution of both Stopes's Japanglian relationship and those of others in somatic terms, we find in these texts a persistent attempt to convey a sense of distance between the present and a past of Japanglian corporeal engagement. I thus go on to consider the use of these distancing devices in the section that follows. Finally, I argue that however much figures such as Stopes and Fujii might hope to flee Japanglian engagement, such encounters cannot be so readily escaped or erased.

I

A study of Stopes's Japan writings is perhaps most significant for the light it sheds on a central aspect of the author's thinking: eugenicism. Richard Soloway notes that Stopes was "a eugenicist long before she became a birth controller," an observation seconded by John Peel.¹⁵ Moreover, Stopes joined the British Eugenics Society in 1912, precisely the time at which she was concerned with her Japan writings. Her choice of slogan for her Mother's Clinic would reflect this eugenicist concern; the clinic promised "Joyous and Deliberate Motherhood. A Sure Light in Our Racial Darkness."¹⁶ At this point, one might suggest that British eugenicist discourse was largely concerned with class, rather than matters of race, and that such a reference to "Race" did not necessarily allude to non-white others. As Angelique Richardson writes, "[e]ugenics was deeply inflected by different national concerns, so that while in Germany it

centred on issues of mental health and in the United States it was a discourse on race, in Britain it was primarily a discourse on class."¹⁷ True as this might be, white supremacy was still a fairly standard aspect of British eugenicist thought.¹⁸ David Bradshaw notes that a "dread of being swamped by Asian hordes ... was not uncommon" among British eugenicists."¹⁹ A reading of Stopes's Japan writings confirms that this seldom-considered racist strand in British eugenic discourse also held appeal for Stopes. While the initial misgivings about interraciality that prompted that early medical consultation might have been assuaged during the course of her affair with Fujii, as I will detail later, the breakdown of the relationship would presage the resurfacing of such doubts. Racialised eugenicism, it seems, had her support long before a 1933 interview in which she told the *Australian Women's Weekly* that "all half-castes should be sterilised at birth," and also before she evinced concomitant support for the prohibition of interracial marriage.²⁰ In the Japan writings, then, we will encounter a relatively neglected aspect of one of the foundation-stones of Stopes's thought as well as evidence for what might have inspired such thinking.

At the same time as they suggest that Stopes's views on race were more reactionary than has hitherto been widely acknowledged, the Japan writings also complicate contemporary claims regarding the eugenicist's conservative positioning vis-à-vis gender roles. Lucy Burke is one of a number of scholars who

have critiqued Stopes's vision of female sexuality, writing of "Stopes's intent to cleanse the sphere of sexuality with 'normal soap.'"²¹ Along somewhat different lines but no less critically, Margaret Jackson describes Stopes's "initial commitment to female sexual autonomy" as being "undermined by an essentially phallocentric model of sexuality in which sex was reduced to a coital imperative."²² But the *Love Letters*, it would seem, may only be argued to present a phallocentric sexual relationship insofar as Stopes herself seeks to grasp phallic power or masculine status for herself. In constructing a vision of their future together in her letters to Fujii, Stopes repeatedly presents herself as an active, penetrating force in contrast to a passive, receptive Fujii. "Properly the husband reads aloud to the wife while she is sewing," she explains in a letter dated April 2, "but I expect that it will be that while you are drawing, or perhaps doing nothing" (*LL*, from *MM*, Seaside, April 2, p. 258). In a subsequent letter, she combines references to the type of affective marriage familiar to readers of *Married Love*—in which "you will care for my work, and I will care for yours ... and we love the same things and dream the same dreams"—with a recollection in which she is once again the active instigator to the passive Fujii. She recalls the Japanese man "as you looked in my arms, that afternoon by the lake, sitting on my knee ... your neck so pretty, and ... your eyes ... so soft and sweet" (*LL*, from *MM*, July 14, 292-3). Here, terms conventionally associated with femininity—"pretty," "soft," "sweet"—are used to describe Fujii, while

conventionally masculine and somewhat infantilising actions are ascribed to Stopes.

Perhaps even more interestingly, Fujii himself not only accedes to this presentation of himself but also volunteers supporting characterisations of the pair. Matching Stopes's acknowledgement that "I felt that you were my child ... [p]erhaps ... because I taught you to kiss!—a thing children learn from their mothers," (*LL*, from *MM*, London, February 19, p. 238), we encounter Fujii's hope that "[y]ou will be my own, and simultaneously my teacher" (*LL*, from *KW*, Tokio, February 22, p. 222). All the more intriguing is the couple's mutual construction of Stopes as an exploratory, penetrative force. For Fujii, there is something in Stopes's letter "to penetrate my heart." "[O]h my dearest, my wife," he adds, "you are so beautiful ... and yet so sharp and strong as an iron weapon to pierce my heart, which resisted all kinds of weapons of other people before I met you" (*LL*, from *KW*, Tokio, Home, April 26, p. 270). Similarly, Fujii confesses that his "body longs so much for your touch," for "the innermost part of my body, the seat of love, trembles even with the visional thought of your touch" (*LL*, from *KW*, on the journey in Japan, September 2, pp. 300-1). Even in hindsight, in her penning of the introduction to *Love Letters*, Stopes maintains this self-presentation, writing of "his soul, his love, which lay dormant till Mertyl waked it." And while these characterisations of the relationship may suggest a

reversal of traditional, early-twentieth-century gender roles, they are also accompanied by intriguing assertions of androgyny. For Fujii, Stopes “do[es] not seem to be a lady, but simply my love itself” (LL, from KW, Tokio, in the Garden, September 24, p. 312). Similarly, Stopes frontloads the ostensibly conventional statement that “it pleases me when you do the man’s part” (with its unmistakable suggestion that masculinity would involve conscious role adoption for Fujii), with the assertion that “I know with us two, we are both man and woman each of us, so mixed and completely fused” (LL, from MM, London, March 23, p. 254). It might be argued that *Married Love* presents a narrowly heteronormative band of acceptable sexual relationships, replacing the androgyny of the letters with the statement that “nature has created us so that we are incomplete in ourselves; neither man nor woman singly can know the joy of the performance of all the human functions.”²³ But given the relationship presented in the letters, with its alternation between androgyny and conventional gender role reversal, one cannot extrapolate from *Married Love* to make larger claims about the conservatism of Stopes’s entire oeuvre or her thinking as a whole.

Moreover, it might be said that Stopes’s experiences with Fujii and in Japan encouraged precisely the kind of analysis of European heterosexual relationships that would lead her to pen *Married Love*. In her introduction to *Love*

Letters, Stopes implicitly contrasts the rigidity of European gender roles with the greater fulfillment to be offered in Japan. She opines that “[a]bove all things a woman longs to be understood, to have her slightest actions noted, to have her thoughts felt before they are expressed.” In contrast with the brutish and immature European, who, “meeting Japanese ... [is] in the position of [a] child ... stirring up pools on the shore in which sea anemones are living,” Stopes offers “the men of the Japanese nation, so long trained to grasp subtleties of expression ... [and] in many respects unusually qualified to give this understanding to a companion with whom they are intimate” (*LL*, p. 5). Furthermore, as *Journal from Japan* suggests, this sense of a new experience of heterosexual and heterosocial relationships pervades Stopes’s experience in Japan, even after her relationship with Fujii has dissolved. Finding that she will be sharing a room on a steam ship with two Japanese men, the Englishwoman moves from initial shock to thinking “again that we have too much the trail of the serpent about our customs” (*JJ*, p. 11). “I slept in the train with men near me, why not in the steamer,” she muses (*JJ*, p. 11). Here, a lowering of the barriers between the genders prompts Stopes to reexamine the gender norms of her home society.

Such a reexamination may additionally have been prompted by the scientist’s experience of her own anomalousness in Japan. In numerous situations, she finds herself fussed over as the only woman—or, at least, the only

woman scientist—in a social or professional situation. On some of these occasions, she is accorded honorary male status, despite the continued marginalisation of the Japanese wives of her male colleagues. For example, on a day trip with a Professor S. and his wife, the latter, being less educated and therefore not proficient in English, has “no one else to talk to” for the entirety of the trip, while Stopes and the professor “talk ... of nearly everything under heaven and earth” (*JJ*, p. 96). The process of analysis that produced the birth control campaigner’s model of the modern, companionate marriage might thus be said to have begun in Japan, where the possibility of a radically different form of engagement with men opened itself up to her.

Given the stark differences between the claimed conservatism of her later work and the exploratory, reflective cast of the *Journal* and *Love Letters*, one might have trouble connecting the dots between the two phases in Stopes’s thinking. Without wishing to be reductive, I would propose that one way of situating Stopes’s later work in relation to her earlier writing is by reading the conservatism of texts such as *Married Love* as part of an extended defensive response to what may have registered as past indiscretions. This tendency toward defensive disavowal becomes particularly apparent when one considers two aspects of the Japan writings that resurface later in Stopes’s life and writing: the expression of same-sex desire and the author’s awareness of political

impediments to conjugal harmony. With regard to the former, the scientist's journal is of greatest interest. In one instance, Stopes enjoys an afternoon of tea with a Mrs. D, who "had another lovely frock, and was a dream of sweetness and beauty" (*JJ*, pp. 111-2). "Why do I always fall in love with women!" she wonders, recalling the event. In an earlier incident, Stopes, noting the "lovely shoulders" of "the belle of the ball ... whose father was English and mother was Japanese," opines that she "long[s] ... to be a man and marry her" (*JJ*, p. 66). For a time, then, it would appear that neither same-sex attraction nor interraciality was lamentably degenerate in Stopes's eyes. And yet, as Alexander Geppert writes, by the time *Married Love* appeared 1918, "all deviant conduct such as abortion, homosexuality, masturbation or premarital sex was to be repudiated ..." ²⁴ Moreover, Stopes went on to speak strenuously against homosexuality in the years after her Japanese sojourn. As Ruth Hall notes in regard to an early "adolescent passion" of Stopes's, this "total rejection ... [was] all the more violent for her own unacknowledged penchant." ²⁵ The author's desire to "cleanse" sexual behaviour with "normal soap" might thus be read, via her Japan writings, as a defensive response to her own experiences of same-sex and interracial desire.

One observes a similar tendency with regard to Stopes's recognition—or denial—of the importance of sociopolitical factors in determining marital

happiness. In this regard, even the fairly sympathetic Lesley Hall notes that “Stopes’s lack of attention to existing gender-power relations and her assumptions that they could be resolved within the private sphere with transformative results for society as a whole compromised her radical message even while rendering it easier to swallow.”²⁶ Once again, the Japan writings suggest an authorial persona that is at significant variance with the conservative image presented by some Stopes scholars. Rather than a blithe assumption that her relationship with Fujii would remain inviolate vis-à-vis issues of race and geopolitics, Stopes repeatedly expresses anxiety about the externally imposed barriers to marital happiness. In a letter dated February fifth, Stopes ventures that she “do[es] not mind now at all that you are Japanese,” with the caveat that “many people will not be able to understand our love” (*LL*, from *MM*, London, February 5, pp. 225-6). And social factors may have an even more insidious influence on the relationship, shaping not merely the attitudes of outsiders, but also those of her lover. “[I]t is not you I fear,” she reassures Fujii, before adding, “[i]t is that I fear the thing that may be stronger than you, the tradition and heredity given to you by hundreds of your ancestors—which may influence you unconsciously” (*LL*, from *MM*, London March 13, p. 246). (The invocation of heredity, a eugenicist watchword, is also of interest, for it suggests that Stopes’s anxieties related to obstacles perceived to be more intractable than social attitudes.) To be sure, the Stopes of the *Love Letters* is less concerned with the

constraints imposed by existing gender power structures than she is with those presented by prevailing racial hierarchies. But this concern nonetheless amounts to a degree of sociopolitical awareness that critics charge the author with lacking in her later writing on marriage. Might we thus read her subsequent failure to register the weight of the sociopolitical as yet another defensive disavowal of a difficult past? Regardless of the answer to this question, Stopes's Japan writings are of significance for the challenge they pose to assumptions about the author's unalloyed conservatism.

While it does not throw *Married Love* into relief in the way that *Love Letters* or *A Journal from Japan* do, *Plays of Old Japan: The Noh* is also of scholarly significance. Scholars of early English-language treatments of Noh drama have tended to focus on the work of Ezra Pound, W. B. Yeats, and their progenitor, Ernest Fenollosa. But, as Blacker writes, prior to the publication of Stopes and Sakurai's text, "no single volume had appeared in English devoted to the Nō."²⁷ Indeed, Pound and Yeats were only beginning their discussions of the Noh in the year in which *POJN* appeared. Moreover, *POJN* was rare among all writing on the subject in being aimed at a general audience, rather than the scholarly community.²⁸ And yet, despite this orientation toward general interest, the text sprang much more directly from engagement with Japan—and a more sustained engagement—than is the case with the work of Stopes's more famous male

contemporaries. Kobayashi Manji suggests that the modernists may have benefited from the models of translation provided by Stopes and other Anglophone residents of Japan, thus standing on the shoulders of some not-so-giant figures.²⁹ According to Stopes's recollections in a 1956 letter, Pound had in fact unsuccessfully requested that she collaborate with him on a Noh translation.³⁰ *POJN* is thus of significance not only as a document of Japanglian engagement, then, but also in its relation to the transatlantic modernist canon.

II

Having considered the larger scholarly significance of a study of Stopes's Japan writings, we may now return to the central question addressed by this project: the nature of Anglo-Japanese engagements in this period. Before considering the ways in which Stopes's writing strains at the corporeal bounds of Japanglia, we need to establish that the texts do in fact narrate a Japanglian encounter.

Perhaps most obviously—and yet surprisingly—*POJN* is unique among the texts considered hitherto in that, at least ostensibly, it constitutes a conventionally coauthored text. Indeed, Blacker describes the text as a “permanent monument to [the] ... friendship” between Stopes and Sakurai.³¹

Unlike the case considered in our first chapter, neither party entered into this collaboration unwillingly or unwittingly. Nor does one need to read intertextually (as in chapter three) or inter-artistically (as in chapter two) in order to observe this Japanglian engagement. As one might expect of a coauthored text, it is difficult for the reader who approaches the text without knowledge of archival materials to establish where the contribution of the English author ends and that of the Japanese author begins (and vice versa). In this case, it becomes even more difficult to delineate the contributions of the two when one considers Stopes's own statements regarding her Japanese proficiency. "In a language so widely diverging from our own in its construction and mode of thought," she writes, "the details of the literary style and composition are beyond my reach of judgment" (*POJN*, pp. 3-4). This concession is matched by an admission in *Journal from Japan* that "the concrete bounds the realm of my speech" in Japanese (*JJ*, p. 141). How Stopes could have collaborated in the translation of a set of Classical Japanese texts is thus unclear. Nor does scholarship on the matter offer illumination. Blacker notes that Sakurai "was to do a first translation, which she [Stopes] was then to work into a finished product."³² But she also writes that "the version she [Stopes] gave" to Sakurai "was ... full of rather serious mistakes of translation, which Dr. Sakurai speedily corrected."³³ While the first observation suggests that Sakurai was the main author of the translations, the latter suggests that he only corrected Stopes's work. In this very indeterminacy, in the

impossibility of separating English from Japanese creative contributions, we encounter a distinctly Japanglian text.³⁴

Additionally, much like the milieu of international exhibition organisers described in the first chapter, the environment in which Stopes met her coauthor might properly be described as Japanglian. Her transition into work in Japan was smoothed by her familiarity with the Japanglian world of laboratory scientists. Reflecting upon a welcome dinner given in her honour, Stopes notes that “[n]early every one had been abroad, and between them they knew almost all my European and American scientific friends.” For this reason, “I did not feel as though I was in a strange land” (*JJ*, pp. 71-2). Moreover, in addition to existing as a floating, transnational space, the world of science offered opportunities for new kinds of engagements between men and women. For “although many literary and other people hold scientists up to scorn in their relation to daily life, it is in truth only from them that one can get an all-satisfying comradeship and comprehension” (*JJ*, pp. xiii-xiv). It is also in this realm that Stopes formed that other relationship that took her beyond conventional gender expectations, that is, her relationship with Fujii. And it was the infrastructure of transnational scientific research, in the form of a Royal Society grant, that allowed Stopes to pursue her lover to Japan. *POJN* is thus the product of a Japanglian collaboration that, in turn, emerges from a similar milieu.

Quite aside from these connections in the form of authorial partnerships and international scholarly networks, *Love Letters* presents us with a previously unexamined form of engagement—what I will term “Japanglian intersubjectivity.” The lovers repeatedly speak of the merging of their two consciousnesses, their desire, as expressed by Fujii, for “our joint work to be carried out and published as if it was made by the perfectly joined hands of one person” (*LL*, from KW, London, August 25, pp. 25-6). Stopes reinforces this sense of merged consciousness in her introduction with the claim that “learned from each other and grew into each other’s minds” (*LL*, pp. 5-6). But perhaps more indicative of such merging than any explicit avowals is the way in which, in the course of their correspondence, Fujii and Stopes engage in a process of reciprocal linguistic instruction, thus producing a shared vocabulary. Just as Fujii instructs her in writing Japanese script, the Englishwoman also instructs her lover in the formal means of opening and concluding correspondence in English. “If I was born with English customs I need not learn forms,” Fujii reasons, “but for me, who is grown without knowing any of them, the learning of forms is the shortest and surest way to get to the right point of discarding them” (*LL*, from KW, Vienna July 12, pp. 17-8). In this way, Stopes might instruct him in a manner that allows him, ultimately, to develop his own means of speaking independently.

Perhaps, then, the Japanglian intersubjectivity of Stopes and Fujii is initiated with the preconditions for its dissolution already established. Indeed, what is most interesting about these moments of intersubjectivity is the way in which Stopes chafes against such imbrication. Time and again, the Englishwoman expresses frustration regarding Fujii's tendency to speak *her* English back to her. "Please choose your way of beginning [letters], and do as you would like to do," she urges him, adding that "I do not like your doing my way when I know you do not like it" (*LL*, from *MM*, London Jan 3, p. 44). And Fujii responds with assertions of his own agency and subjectivity in English. "Such closing as I use for you ... are no more part of the so called 'society,'" he argues. Rather "they are wild flowers, not those in the garden" (*LL*, from *KW*, London January 4, p. 45). In the terms I have employed hitherto, then, Stopes appears to be reading Fujii's use of language as a contact-based similarity, whereas Fujii wishes to argue for parallel development on his part, for something more akin to coincidence-based similarity. And where Stopes worries about the excessive degree of similarity that might arise from this intersubjective merging, Fujii appears concerned that, even in spite of such merging, Stopes might still not be sufficiently similar to him. Thus, although he narrates a dream in which "I forgot myself and you, that we were two persons," such forgetting is predicated upon Stopes having "eyes ...quite black and white—not brown," a phenotype closer to being typically Japanese (*LL*, from *KW*, Tokio, Home May

27, p. 281). So, *Love Letters* might present the merging of the pair into a third, Japanglian subjectivity. But from its inception, such merging is fraught with complication and contradiction.

III

It is at this juncture that we might consider the ways in which Stopes's Japan writings register a straining of bonds within this transcultural Japanglian network. In the section that follows, I want to consider the ways in which the breakdown in the Stopes/Fujii relationship is figured not only in terms of racial difference but also in terms of corporeal contact. I will briefly consider the former first, before moving on to look at the latter.

As the relationship between Stopes and Fujii disintegrates, both parties retreat from their previous commitment to transcending racial differences, instead invoking such differences to justify their own behaviour or opinions and explain the behaviour of the other party. The use of racial classifications to justify personal opinion is most apparent in Stopes's letters. In a missive dated January fifth, Stopes opines that "it is a thing which is impossible for me (and I think for any English woman) to understand that you could have been too busy to send me more than one postcard in two months" (*LL*, from *MM*, London January 5, p. 324). Here, Fujii's behaviour is positioned as anomalous not in terms of his own

past actions but rather relative to the behaviour of numberless, nameless English women. With the invocation of Englishness, Fujii's Japaneseness (or, simply, his foreignness) implicitly becomes an explanation for insensitive behaviour. And in addition to being invoked to suggest the wrongfulness of Fujii's actions, Englishness is presented as a possible means by which the two might better understand each other. "Forgive me that I doubted your love these last weeks," Stopes asks, adding that "if you were English you would realize that you had given me reason to do so" (*LL*, from *MM*, London, February 9, p. 327). Here, interraciality becomes a stumbling block, rather than something that might be transcended affectively. Fujii appears to share such a view. In his last letter to Stopes (for many years, at least), the Japanese scientist twice expresses the hope that his former love will "marry some nice Englishman" (*LL*, from *KW*, Tokio, September 28, pp. 345-6). Indeed, this wish forms both the first and last sentences of that letter. Book-ended by those sentences is the suggestion that his affection for Stopes was, more than anything else, a taste for Europeaness. "When I was in Europe I wished to experience all things after European fashion," he ventures, "I did not intended [*sic*] however to have love with any lady, but you were so sweet I smoothed into it unawares, and according to my Europeanised thought it was so delicious" (*LL*, from *KW*, Tokio, September 28, pp. 345-6). Fujii thus declares that once "becoming more returned to my original state, among Japanese ... the idea of love changed," with the recognition that loving "any

lady, in such a strong way as I loved you, is quite out of my natural thought, and the thought of any Japanese" (*LL*, from *KW*, Tokyo, September 28, pp. 345-6). Just as Stopes had invoked the English polity to justify and normalise her thinking, so too does Fujii ally himself with an implied Japanese everyman, by the standards of whom his behaviour is to be judged and justified. He thus deems his past behaviour regrettable.

But Stopes does not merely invoke race as she attempts to understand the disintegration of the relationship; Fujii's body is additionally figured as the site of interpersonal failure. Preceding that final letter by only a few pages is this editorial note (with original brackets included): "[The inability to master the situation so evident in his letters is largely to be accounted for by his ill health ...]" With this in mind, we might begin to consider the ways in which the failure of the relationship is presented as something that is both caused by and registered on the bodies of the two lovers. In this regard, a number of concepts enunciated in James Krasner's study of literary portrayals of grief will prove useful. Krasner examines "embodied grief," the way in which the loss of a loved one is registered somatically by those who survive and, in turn, how such loss is represented in various literary texts.³⁵ In so doing, he utilises the neurological phenomenon of "body schema," whereby we "experience our loved one's bodies as contiguous with our own," and therefore register grief as a form of "bodily

dismemberment.”³⁶ Krasner goes on to explain that in physically intimate relationships, “[t]he body schema dilates, absorbing the beloved’s body into a space of relative safety composed of both bodies in combination.”³⁷ In this regard, Stopes and Fujii might be said to collectively construct a Japanglian body schema. The death or absence of the loved one is conversely experienced as a contraction of the body schema, a collapse in which the subject, experiencing physical clumsiness and disorientation, is forced to acknowledge the essential separateness of her body from that of her lover. It is via these concepts of “embodied grief” and the “body schema” that I wish to consider the narration of the dissolution of the Stopes/Fujii affair.

The concept of the body schema offers one way in which to explain the circumstances in which Fujii severed romantic ties with Stopes. In order to illuminate this point, let us first consider these circumstances. Soon after the English woman’s arrival in Japan, Fujii informed her that he had contracted leprosy. Stopes makes vague but repeated references to the Japanese scientist’s illness in *JJ*. She describes an incident in which she “called round to see how Professor F was, as I had heard nothing of any kind for a fortnight. I saw him for a short time. His face was rather swollen, for they have been injecting strychnine [one of the accepted treatments for leprosy at the time], but otherwise he looked all right, only he could see so little” (*JJ*, p. 157). Indeed, Fujii may have “looked

all right” precisely because he was. Ruth Hall writes that “Fujii lived until the age of eighty-six—eight years longer than Marie.” Moreover, “[a]ccording to those who remember him, he remained in excellent healthy until his death ... His son ... recalls no talk of leprosy; nor does [his widow] ... Fujii’s former students were amused at the idea.”³⁸ There appears, then, to be some evidence that Fujii’s claimed leprosy was a pretence.

But to what end? Fujii was apparently aware of Stopes’s horror of the disease. The journal bears this out, narrating more than one traumatic encounter with a leper. She worries “[o]ne may easily touch one [leper] by accident,” and wonders at the lack of fear of leprosy among the Japanese, “how ... they pretend to civilisation with such sights in their streets” (*JJ*, pp. 98-9). In a foreshadowing of her later eugenic tendencies, she marvels that “[i]n a generation Norway cleared the country of lepers but here one may touch one any day” (*JJ*, p. 210). In both cases, it is the possibility of skin-to-skin contact with a leper that appears most disturbing to Stopes. Given his apparent knowledge of his lover’s particular aversion, we might suggest, following Ruth Hall, that Fujii selected the ailment somewhat strategically, believing that it would be the most effective means of minimising contact with Stopes.³⁹ That the journal details an improvement in the Japanese scientist’s health shortly before Stopes’s departure also bears this out (*JJ*, p. 251). We might now read Fujii’s behaviour in complementary terms via the

concept of the body schema. In addition to being infectious, Fujii's chosen ailment rendered the surface of the body, the skin, hostile to contact with the surfaces of other bodies. Claims of leprosy might thus be read as part of a bid to (rein)force the emotional separation of the lovers via a particularly violent bisection of the Japanglian body schema that they had developed in the course of their encounters. As a putative leper, Fujii would replace this single, Japanglian body schema with two separate bodies, one English, one Japanese.

Stopes's response to the stress of Fujii's leprosy might additionally be read in terms of the body schema. Fujii is not the only putative leper in the Japan writings. Rather, some months into her stay in Japan, the generally hardy Stopes found herself unable to leave her bed and forced to rely on the ministrations of much-distrusted doctors. "It is," she avows, "the first day of my life that I have ever spent in bed" (*JJ*, p. 114). She was suffering, it would seem, from an attack of psychosomatic leprosy.⁴⁰ The psychological roots of the disorder might explain why, after feeling "so seedy that I did not get up at all," Stopes feels, mere hours later, the contentment of being "surrounded by the lovely golden lights on bare wood" (*JJ*, p. 114).

If one considers *Love Letters* more closely, it becomes apparent that the ultimate division of the Japanglian body schema effected by Fujii's ostensible

leprosy is by no means a sudden development. Rather, this division is preceded by numerous attempts to compensate for the change in body schema that has already been achieved by the lovers' geographic separation. In the letters, one finds the lovers repeatedly relying on fetish objects as stand-ins for all or part of the absent loved one. In doing so, they are temporarily able to avoid reckoning with the collapse of the Japanglian body schema. In one particularly striking instant, Stopes confesses that, when "long[ing] for the physical touch" of Fujii, "I sometimes ... take a girdle and bind it tightly, so tightly that I can hardly breathe, round my waist, and then close my eyes a little and dream that it is your arms around me" (*LL*, from *MM*, Zurich Aug 1, p. 104). Although less obviously tactile in their pleasures, both lovers also take to treating letters from the other as fetish objects representing the other's body. Stopes thus takes a new letter from Fujii "upstairs to lie with me unopened while I dress ... read[ing] it first lying in a nice hot bath ... [before] put[ting] on the blue dress you liked, and on my finger the little ring, and c[oming] downstairs to sit over the fire and read it again" (*LL*, from *MM*, London September 29, p. 133). Here, the letter "lies" with Stopes much in the manner of a lover, the verb suggesting both the placement of a material object and willed human recumbency. And Fujii treats Stopes's letters similarly, acknowledging that "Deine Briefe [your letter]... is to my mind you and your person" (*LL*, from *KW*, London June 28, p. 86).

In addition to “your last letter” (*LL*, from *KW*, June 9, p. 73) Fujii also kisses “my own hand, in the dream that it was your lips” (*LL*, from *KW*, October 12, p. 136). Fujii’s kissing of his own hands and arms is narrated numerous times in the course of the letters. In such instances, it would seem that he treats a portion of his own body more precisely in the manner of a part object than as a fetish.⁴¹ In any case, both fetish and part objects appear to act as prostheses, allowing for the maintenance of a conjoined body schema in spite of a change in actual circumstances. But these efforts can only have temporary effects. As Fujii finds, such metonymic thinking ultimately suffers from its own success.

“Everything which may serve association awoke my thought upon you—woods, sea, rocks, sunrise, sunset, stars, sky, eve ink, soap, table meals, ladies, dresses, music, rings, ribbons, almost anything,” he relates (*LL*, from *KW*, Near Singapore, August 11, p. 114). Carried to an extreme, fetishism presents the subject with the dispersal of the lover’s body via a surfeit of associations. Stopes is at once everywhere and nowhere. For Stopes as well, fetish objects ultimately have their limitations. For in calling an end to their affair, Fujii renders such objects ineffective as corporeal supports. In a note accompanying some gifts being voluntarily returned to Fujii, Stopes writes that “now you take them all away from me,” when “[e]ach bears my kisses through the years I had it, and each has become a part of myself” (*LL*, from *MM*, Tokyo, Sept 20, p. 345). The closing stages of the affair thus involve initial attempts to maintain this conjoined

body schema followed by a ruse designed to effect complete division. In both cases, the body becomes the locus of the relationship's dissolution.

Embodied grief also manifests in the poetic elements of *Love Letters*. The text begins with the following poetic epigraph, which Stopes attributes to her alter-ego, Mertyl Meredith:

When my friend doth speak
 I hear the echo ever,
 Of a mountain peak
 Whose rocks and snows together
 Utter a mighty silence.

(*LL*, n.p.)

Krasner quotes a few lines from the autobiographical writing of David Wills, in which Wills relates a memory of his father, an amputee. Glossing the writing, Krasner notes that "the poetic rhythm is disrupted by his bodily rhythms, lurching his [Wills's father's] loss back into motion."⁴² Changes in the body schema may thus register in the poetics of a text. Similarly, here, the corporeal change produced by separation from the lover manifests in the poetic epigraph. Most notably, the use of the word "silence" in the last line of the epigraph

disrupts the a/b/a/b rhyme scheme established by the preceding lines. With its long “i” vowel sounds, the line must also be enunciated more slowly than those that precede it. The concept of silence, with the suggestion of a failure of communication, is thus reinforced by aural, somatically experienced aspects of the poetry. We might additionally note that the speaker does not hear the voice of the lover but rather something at a remove from the voice, the monotonously alliterative “echo ever.” The paradox of a silent utterance further suggests interpersonal disengagement. Writing of the somatics of translation, Carol Maier notes instances of “body writing ... writing by a body,” in which somatic experience shapes what is written.⁴³ Here, as the epigraph descends into dissonance, we find the textual manifestation of such somatic experience, of the collapse of the body schema.

The introduction to *Love Letters*, which is credited to “M. C. Stopes,” offers additional, more explicit, confirmation that the end of the Japanglian affair is to be attributed to corporeal factors. Indeed, the only references to bodies in this section relate directly to relationship failure. Most strikingly, Stopes offers, by way of illustration of the undesirability of interracial unions, the following anecdote of a marriage between an Englishwoman and a Japanese man:

With all conditions favourable, even with love such as he offered at the best and highest point of rapture, there must have come regrets and unimagined sorrows, creeping silently. One woman I knew, married to a Japanese man who was both suitable socially and an intellectual equal, had a little son four years old. He was a delicious child—beautiful, merry, sunny-hearted and clever. One day he said to her that he hoped she would not come to a children's party to which he was going. "Why?" she said. "Oh, your hair is different from a nice Japanese mama's. Theirs is all smooth and black like ebony, yours is brown and un-smooth. There are no little boys whose mammas have hair like that. I like you at home, but not at parties." My heart ached for all that was to follow and to cut like knives into that mother's heart. Mertyl Meredith was saved this.

(*LL*, p. 10)

Here, a phenotypic marker—the mother's hair—becomes the indicator of inevitable future sorrow, of "all that was to follow." The social and the intellectual, which are both referenced in describing the marriage, are quickly trumped by this visible marker of ethnicity. The speech attributed to the little boy replaces the "smooth[ness]" of Japanese hair with a term that signifies only what it lacks, "un-smooth." The interracial child, the introduction implies,

necessarily experiences an estrangement from one parent, and this estrangement is experienced corporeally. Moreover, Stopes's own empathic, affective response to the anecdote is also registered in corporeal terms—the aching of her own heart and the imagined cutting of the other woman's heart. The introduction thus provides us with an instance of what Peter Brooks terms “a narrative aesthetics of embodiment, where meaning and truth are made carnal.”⁴⁴

But it is not simply that the body thwarts identification between the parent and the interracial child; it may ultimately refuse to bear the strain of interracial engagement. It is in this regard that we need to consider the other reference to corporeality to be found in the introduction to *Love Letters*. The opening pages of the text present us with the observation that

[i]t is very evident, in reading the letters, that the physical ill health which overtook him [Fujii] at such increasingly frequent intervals had much influence in weakening the life of the love-soul that was born to him in Europe ... His weak and ever-weakening body could not bear the strain of masculine desire, and in a country and among companions with whom the love of man and woman is a secondary thing ... it is not surprising that his attitude should

change entirely, till he was in a state of soul-character—call it what you will—to say to her what he said in his last letter.

(*LL*, pp. 6-7)

Here, Fujii's change of heart, which is presented as the main factor behind the termination of the relationship, is explained in terms of an interplay between the national and the corporeal. Just as Fujii's "masculine desire" is undermined by his "weak and ever-weakening body," so too do Japanese national traditions erode his ardour, producing a situation in which "it is not surprising that his attitude should change entirely." Fujii is presented as completely devoid of agency here, his environment and his body conspiring against him. This emasculating presentation of an enervated Japanese male body is all the more significant when one considers the invisibility of the writer's body in this context, with the introduction containing no explicit mention of Stopes's corporeality.⁴⁵ In a context in which corporeal visibility—for both Fujii and the English woman described elsewhere in the introduction—is associated with vulnerability, this is perhaps unsurprising.

Incidentally, we might also note that although Stopes does not make her own body visible to the reader in the introduction to *Love Letters*, it would appear that she has subjected herself to her own gaze of self-scrutiny. For in remarking

upon an unfavourable, outside perspective on a European phenotype (wavy hair), the writer implicitly indicates that she, too, has adopted a kind of double vision, imagining her own, non-Japanese body from the perspective of a Japanese or Anglo-Japanese person. It is via the adoption of this perspective that she is able to envisage a future with Fujii that is less than ideal. In this regard, the text shares something with the Japan writing of Rudyard Kipling in particular, for that author also subjects his corporeal form to visual scrutiny in the wake of an encounter with a racial other when he imagines himself as an ungainly giant while in a Japanese curio shop.

Returning to the presentation of the Japanese male body, one finds that suggestions of Fujii's weakness are also buttressed by contrasting claims of Stopes's strength. Her love, the introduction tells us, "was strengthened by the tradition of her nation." She adds that "[w]hatever the individual successions, England retains the heroic standard of lifelong monogamic devotion, and Mertyl, idealist as she was, was in no position, even in that Eastern country which had influenced her lover, to yield and take unwillingly the lesser idea of love he offered" (*LL*, pp. 7-8). While the introduction may not make the body of Stopes/Mertyl visible, it metonymically suggests that Stopes is of greater physical fortitude than Fujii, with its references to the strengthening power of the national traditions with which she is associated and an implicitly masculine

“heroic standard.” The use of the terms “position” and “yield,” with their connotations of a location in space, additionally suggest a physical bettering of the Japanese man, adding yet another dimension to the unconventionality of this heterosexual relationship. The introduction to *Love Letters* thus not only attributes the failure of the relationship to Fujii’s physical weakness but additionally presents Stopes in contrasting terms.

Corporeality is also presented as an obstacle to Japanglian engagement in *POJN*. Unlike in *Love Letters*, however, the body assumes figurative status. In the two most striking instances of this corporeal figuration, somatic experience or the presence of the body thwarts scholarly analysis. In the first case, excessively close analysis is presented as undesirable because of its association with a loss of perspective, a loss that is figured as regrettably corporeal. Stopes writes in her introduction to the plays that “[t]here is a focal distance for every work of art,” adding the caution that “if we choose to overstep it and go and rub our noses against the canvas of supreme genius, we will only find smeary paint and an unpleasant odour.” “[D]elicate fantasies,” the Noh plays may only be presented behind “shrouding veils” (*LL*, p. 4). Here, close analysis not only demystifies the delicate; it also produces an experience of both olfactory and tactile distaste. And such unpleasantness can only be a distraction from the act of analysis.

But it is in her discussion of the translation process that Stopes offers her most negative presentation of the distractions of corporeality. Reasoning that “[t]he sudden intrusion of the body, particularly the imperfect or ill-managed body, is the source of most of the comic element in human life,” Stopes writes that she has “felt it essential to make the body of my translations as little irritating and noticeable as possible, while at the same time preserving, as far as the language will allow, complete truthfulness to the spirit of the original.” Literal translations, she adds, “never allow us for a moment to forget the English body of the original Japanese spirit, because the body they give it is out of joint, abnormal in our eyes, and therefore it absorbs our attention or renders ridiculous the hints it conveys that the spirit it encloses may have aspired to soar” (*POJN*, pp. 28-9). Here, literal translation is not merely a distraction to be figured in corporeal terms; rather, it is positively miscegenetic in its production of something “abnormal in our eyes.” Languages are figured as bodies, with translation therefore the product of bodily contact. This sexualised vision of translation is prefigured on the second page of the introductory essay, where Stopes presents translation that succeeds in conveying “something of the delicacy and charm of the Nō” as a form of “consummation” (*POJN*, p. 2). In place of the corporeality of literal translation, Stopes hopes to “convey to the English reader something of the true spirit of the Japanese without always

diverting his attention to some peculiarity of the rendering's bodily form"

(*POJN*, p. 28). Once again, corporeality is a distraction to be avoided.

Interestingly, Stopes maintained this connection between linguistic choices and physical (especially sexual) behaviour in her later work. Writing of the birth control campaigner's sexological texts, Paul Peppis notes a "conviction," shared with many other modernist writers, "that changes in language can effect changes in sexual relations."⁴⁶ Burke explores this connection between the textual and the sexual in greater depth. In those later texts, Stopes argues, according to Burke, that the choice of a new terminology for discussing sexual matters "will play a constitutive role in fostering new and regenerated modes of sexual behaviour," thus "moving beyond a sense of language as merely reflective of social and sexual behaviour to a sense of linguistic determinism."⁴⁷ In this vein, Stopes coins neologisms such as the putatively Hellenic "erogamic" for the discussion of sexual behaviour, practising what might be termed "verbal hygiene" by cleansing the lexicon of vulgar terminology such as the word "sexual."⁴⁸ Just as language might produce "cleaner" behaviour, so too might it have a sullyng effect, taking the form of miscegenation in *POJN*. Additionally, in these later texts, the potentially contaminatory effects of language are primarily associated with the linguistic choices of the lower classes. As Burke observes, "the 'vulgar language' of the slums is endowed with the menace and danger of a

sexually transmitted disease.”⁴⁹ Given the eugenic foundations of Stopes’s thinking, it is unsurprising to find this conjunction of sexual contamination and lower-class habitus. In considering Stopes’s earlier writing, we find such contamination connected with encounters with racial, rather than social, others. For Stopes, then, the relationship between linguistic and corporeal choices would always be a close one.

V

Plays of Old Japan and *Love Letters of a Japanese* do not merely detail the intrusions of corporeality into Japanglian engagement, however. Both texts additionally present the reader with a flight from such encounters, and particularly from their corporeal dimensions. In the section that follows, I will consider the ways in which these texts establish distance between English and Japanese subjects.

In order to illustrate this distancing, it is worth staying with Stopes’s discussion of translation in *POJN*. Given that translation is presented as potentially miscegenetic in the text, it is almost unsurprising that *POJN* is as much about the refusal to translate as it is about the attempt to do so. For, although the text begins with what appear to be full translations of Noh plays, it

ultimately recoils from the act of translation. Reasoning that “it does not lend itself so well to complete translation,” Stopes ventures that she “shall give the piece [*Tamura*, the last play presented in the text] merely as a resume, with a few of the more beautiful lines rendered in extenso” (*POJN*, p. 70). But what Stopes offers in the section dealing with *Tamura* cannot be categorised as mere summary. Rather, the “resume” blends paraphrase with commentary on the play. Thus, in addition to clear examples of summary such as “[t]he priest declares that he has met an interesting person, and asks for further information about the famous places around,” (p. 72) one encounters information about the play, such as the fact that it “was written essentially in praise of the virtues and powers of Kannon, [and] is attributed to Motokiyo, the author of *Kagekiyo*” (p. 75). Stopes (and potentially Sakurai, depending on his level of involvement) thus not only refuses to engage in translation but also attempts to incorporate a more distant, critical perspective into the material that is presented. This choice to incorporate critique into description contrasts with the presentation of the other plays in the volume, all of which are presented as full translations that are preceded by and quite separate from commentary. The latter form of presentation, with its absence of distanced critique in the narration of the story, surely allows both reader and writer to engage more closely with the text when not engaged in conscious critique. Taken with the presentation of translation as

potentially miscegenetic, this blending of summary and critique and the refusal to translate altogether might be read as means of avoiding Japanglian interaction.

Even before the section dealing with *Tamura*, *POJN* offers the reader numerous warnings that translation failure may be ahead. The text opens with a preface penned by Baron Katoh, a Japanese diplomat. In a section that appears to damn the translations with faint praise, Katoh ventures that translation of the Noh “into a European language is a most difficult task, and, in my opinion, it is a well-nigh impossible one” (*POJN*, p. vi). Conjecture shades into certainty, with the acknowledgment that “it was very brave of Dr. Marie Stopes and Prof. Sakurai to undertake what I should deem an impossible task” (*POJN*, p. vi). Finally, Katoh offers that “[t]hey have succeeded in their work to the best extent any one can hope to succeed ...” (*POJN*, p. vi) Nor is Stopes any more positive about the prospects for success in her introduction to *POJN*. Her introductory essay begins with a reference to “the extreme remoteness of the subject from everything to which we are accustomed, and the difficulty of translating into our own the obscure language of these mediaeval texts” (*POJN*, p. 2). Hints at the potential for failure are ultimately replaced by confirmations thereof, with Stope conceding that “[i]t is true that a less formal versifying, such as I have used, does not represent truly the Japanese effect” but insisting that “nothing can” (*POJN*, p. 27). The refusal to translate that we encounter in *POJN* is thus amply

foreshadowed in the earlier sections of the text. Moreover, in the context of a miscegenetic conception of translation, such a refusal might be read as an attempt to achieve distance from the corporeality of Japanglian encounters.

Lover Letters of a Japanese also sets the corporeal at a distance. To be sure, the letters extend to nearly three hundred and fifty pages and feature lengthy descriptions of quotidian minutiae. In this sense, they are defined by a nauseating verbal excess that contrasts with the retentive refusal of *POJN*. And their descriptions of the body appear, at first glance, to be anything but distant in their evocation of somatic experience. For example, Stopes narrates an experience of waking “with the feeling that you were near me, every nerve in my body tingling with longing for you, every pulse in my body throbbing with desire” (*LL*, from *KW*, London June 28, p. 86). But descriptions such as this one might be read as attempts to draw the corporeal, the pre-symbolic, into a symbolic system. Brooks writes most persuasively on this narration of corporeality, noting that “the most elaborated symbolic structures and discursive systems ... intimately derive from bodily sensations.”⁵⁰ Descriptions of the body may—like Stopes’s narration of “tingling” and “throbbing” or her reference to “un-smooth” European hair—ostensibly represent attempts to render that body present to the reader, and present via a semiotic system. The “un-smooth” hair thus becomes a signifier of racial outsider status, for example. But, as Brooks notes, they may

only render the body present “within the context of its absence, since the use of the linguistic sign implies the absence of the thing for which it stands.”⁵¹ I want to suggest, then, that despite or perhaps *because* of its detailed descriptions of the corporeal, *Love Letters* seeks to set the body at a distance, to shut the body up in prose and thereby gain a measure of control over it. This attempt to gain control would later become a key aspect of Stopes’s feminism, as she “provided women with a language for speaking about sexual and reproductive issues, not only in the intimacy of marital relationships but also in the public domain.”⁵² It may indeed be a measure of Stopes’s continuing preoccupation with gaining distance from corporeality that, as Geppert notes, she later “invented a sex language of her own.”⁵³ *Love Letters* thus distances both reader and narrator from corporeality by drawing the body into the realm of the semiotic.

The letters also contain more overt attempts to establish distance from corporeality. Those descriptions of the body are accompanied in the prefatory material by fairly striking attempts to elide any hint of the sexual. Such attempts become apparent very early on in the section entitled “In Explanation,” which is credited to G. N. Mortlake. The section offers an avowal that “[i]t is true that this love had no physical consummation,” followed by the assertion that “love so vivid and so deep has eternal life” (LL, “In Explanation,” n.p.). The text’s first description of Fujii, while more subtle, also elides physicality; he is “a Japanese

man of middle age and attractive personality; able in his profession, socially distinguished, and charming, he was singularly pure in his life" (LL, "In Explanation"). Here, the term "attractive," which is most commonly used to describe visually perceived phenomena, is instead used to describe the non-corporeal, the "personality." This is accompanied by the explicit reference to Fujii's purity. Avowals of the relationship's purity are also a feature of the introduction, which is credited to M. C. Stopes. There, one is informed that the pair "love[d] comprehensively rather than sexually" (LL, p. 1) and that Fujii was "spiritual and full of subtle perceptions and supersensual understandings" (LL, pp. 3-4). In both cases, the spectre of sexuality is invoked only to be dismissed. That *Love Letters* presents us with a dynamic of distancing from sexuality becomes most apparent when we contrast these moments with references to sexual or quasi-sexual pleasure in the letters. There, we find Stopes musing that "all the physical things of kissing and love are so sweet and holy to me in my love for you" and "wonder[ing] if it [sexual activity] is really 'the lower heaven'" (LL, from MM, London October 13, pp.138-9). Both "In Explanation" and the introduction to the second edition of the letters thus present us with attempts to gain distance not merely from corporeality in general but from sexual activity more specifically.

The corollary of this flight from Japanglian sexual contact is a flight into overblown sacralisation of the lovers' relationship. In the first sentence of the introduction to *Love Letters*, Stopes describes the female letter writer (i.e. herself) as "the only woman who had opened for him the gates of Paradise" (LL, p. 1). Moreover, theirs is "pre-eminently the love of two souls," given that a "girl with [her] ... evident temperament and character could only be won through the gates of her intellectual and spiritual citadel" (LL, pp. 4-5). The introduction concludes by defining the relationship as "so strange a love, lit by the flame of idealism on an exotic altar" (LL, p. 11). Ironically (and, one might venture, hilariously), these ostensibly sacralising descriptions of the lovers and their relationship carry connotations of precisely that which they seek most strenuously to erase—the suggestion of sexual contact. Both the "gates of Paradise" and the "gates of her spiritual and intellectual citadel" carry more than a hint of the hymeneal about them. Interestingly, Lara Fraser notes that early readers of Stopes's subsequent bestseller, *Married Love*, would discuss the text in quasi-religious terms.⁵⁴ This supports Brooks's observation that the "discourse of the sexual body has perhaps replaced theological discourses of the arcane and the sacred for the desacralized era."⁵⁵ In *Love Letters*, however, we seem to encounter the inverse of this phenomenon, a refusal of such a substitution in the form of an attempt to replace the sexual with the sacred. But however much Stopes might attempt to write the body out of her narrative of Japanglian engagement, she appears unable to do so.

It would be myopic to suggest that Stopes's text presents an attempt to suggest distance only from past physical engagement with Fujii, or from Fujii's body. Indeed, if one considers Stopes's choices vis-à-vis the publication process, it becomes apparent that she also wished to short-circuit the implied connection between the text and the authorial body, between *Love Letters* and her own corporeality. *Love Letters* thus both exemplifies and complicates Elana Gomel's point that "what [Jean-Paul] Sartre imagines as a painless separation between the body and the text is charged with tensions, since by readerly consensus, the textual author still 'implies' a particular writer."⁵⁶ It is at this point that we should consider more closely the nature and implications of Stopes's choice of pseudonymous publication. In his study of pseudonymity, the philosopher Lloyd Humberstone remarks on the prevalence of such a mode of publication, adding that cases of so-called "many-one" pseudonymity became more common in the early twentieth century. In such cases, two or more people coauthor a text that is subsequently published using a single pseudonym, the poetic pairing behind "Michael Field" being one prominent example. Humberstone notes that, while it is theoretically possible, he has yet to observe a case of the inverse, of "one-many" pseudonymity.⁵⁷ *Love Letters* appears to be just such a case. Specifically, the text presents us with a case of the splitting of the writing body of Marie Stopes into multiple authorial personae. In what, following the work of K.

K. Ruthven, might be termed a process of “dispersed” authorship, the female writer of the letters becomes “Mertyl Meredith,” the editor of the letters “G. N. Mortlake,” and the writer of the introduction “M. C. Stopes.”⁵⁸

A number of motivations for this estrangement from the authorial body suggest themselves here. John Mullan notes that “[i]n his satires [Jonathan] Swift enacted what he disdained or despised or feared; he imagined what should not be,” and hence simply had to write anonymously.⁵⁹ Stopes had not simply “imagined” what, for a good eugenicist, “should not be,” however; she had brought it into being. And in order to ameliorate matters, she would need to both distance herself from this and attribute to it a larger, less personal significance than mere individual error. Mullan writes that anonymity, a related mode of publication, allows the writer to present the text “divorced from the opinions of a particular author,” the writer thus engaging in an “act of creative self-dispossession.”⁶⁰ Stopes may have been motivated by a similar impulse, a similar drive to categorise the text as more than purely individual opinion. In splitting the writing body into multiple personae, she could create a group of like-minded interpreters of the letters, all arrayed opposite the Japanese object of their interpretation. This drive toward alliance formation becomes apparent in the prefatory material. After encountering a section entitled “In Explanation” and credited to “G. N. Mortlake,” the reader comes upon that introduction credited

to "M. C. Stopes." In the latter, the very nature of the relationship is presented as a matter of consensus among this group of interpreters. "Those who have read, or will read, these letters, must feel at once that the love they embody is infinitely more than a sexual passion," Mortlake insists, first bringing the reader into this circle of agreement. "Indeed," Mortlake adds, "as the editor has pointed out, it was long before the two realized that there was any possibility of such a thing between them" (*LL*, pp. 4-5). Here, one persona is cited as an authority by another. Me, myself, and I are all in agreement. The corporeal estrangement produced by pseudonymity thus has its fringe benefits, distancing Stopes from a regrettable episode and also transforming the narration of that episode into much more than mere personal confession.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, however, this construction of consensus is not entirely successful. The army of me, myself, and I, is afflicted with internal dissent. One encounters conflict both between and within Stopes's various authorial personae. The conflict between personae is most striking. In a letter dated March 18, Stopes opines to Fujii that "I have not peace to write to you a long letter," for "we are removing, and removal is a terrible and upsetting thing" (*LL*, from *MM*, March 18, p. 47). She again emphasises the difficulty of the relocation in a letter dated March 21, lamenting that "our removal is terrible" (*LL*, from *MM*, March 21, p. 49). This latter missive is immediately followed by a

bracketed editorial comment in which the reader is informed that “[t]his removal was not great affair,” and that “Mertyl’s family merely transferred themselves to a different house in Hampstead” (*LL*, p. 49). Such a contradiction between authorial personae is matched by more subtle breaks within personae. These breaks are a particular feature of those passages attributed to the editor, G. N. Mortlake, passages that vacillate uneasily between distanced conjecture and claustrophobic omniscience. Typical in this regard is an editorial comment in which the reader is informed that “[a]gain there is a break in the correspondence, when apparently they met more frequently, discussing many things. The thought that he [Fujii] would in all probability be leaving Europe soon, certainly ripened the friendship between them.” With its use of the term “apparently” and its reference only to the textual evidence, the first sentence remains within the realm of conjecture, as one might expect of something written by a third party. The second sentence, however, moves into another realm altogether, with its suggestion that the editor is privy to the private motivations of both lovers. Contradictions between authorial personae are thus accompanied by more subtle contradictions within personae.

Why might a writer offer up such contradictions? While the second set of contradictions—within personae—might be attributed to the difficulty of carrying off this textual ruse, the first set of contradictions is of a more complex

character. The division around which the text is structured—the claim that “M. C. Stopes,” “G. N. Mortlake,” and “Mertyl Meredith” are all different people—perhaps demands such contradictions between personae in order to appear credible. The editorial persona must, at times, disagree with the letter-writing persona in order to lend validity to claims that they are indeed different people and not merely post-hoc fictional constructs. Necessary as this element of Stopes’s ruse is, however, it is almost impossible to pull off, as the vacillation between conjecture and omniscience within the editorial persona suggests. Stopes thus writes herself into an untenable cluster of subject positions in order to distance herself from her own corporeality. Gomel writes of literature’s ability to “cover ... up its structure of multiple subject positions” in order to effect the “imaginary unification of the self.”⁶¹ In emphasising this structure rather than covering it up, in pursuing the fragmentation of the self as a means of denying the corporeal, *Love Letters* might be described as a representative modernist text. It is additionally representative of the engagements previously considered in this project; estrangement from a racial other or from a past subject position is often purchased at the price of self-estrangement, as we see in the cases of both Kipling and Okakura.

Moreover, it is not merely that these different authorial personae exhibit varying opinions on events within the text; it is also the case that they are given

contrasting occupational roles and attributes. Most obviously (and most interestingly), “M. C. Stopes” is presented as an expert in interracial relationships, particularly those of the Anglo-Japanese variety. She is billed as the “Author of ‘A Journal from Japan.’” This qualification, the text seems to imply, led to her being “asked to write an Introduction for this book,” an honour that she “at first refused ... [for] [t]he task seemed too difficult, though the privilege was great” (LL, p. 1). As an expert, she is able to present a panoramic view of Anglo-Japanese romantic entanglements, thus noting that the “love affairs with geisha, or the corresponding marriages or affairs between Japanese men and their landladies’ daughters in Europe have, naturally, predominated in numbers,” while adding that “[o]thers there have been between men and women each of the best class in their countries” (LL, p. 3). She is also able to draw on knowledge gained first-hand; “[m]any times in my own experience,” she notes, “I have heard Europeans say, ‘How could she have married a Japanese?’” (LL, p. 3). Expert, perhaps scholarly, status, additionally allows Stopes to interpolate the relationship in much larger, even grandiose, terms. With regard to Fujii’s perceived mercuriality, she declares that we “are here on the borderlands of a great philosophic problem. What are the limits, what the determining criteria, of a human soul?” (LL, p. 6). And should the reader follow that reference to *A Journal from Japan*, s/he will find reinforcement for this positioning of Stopes as expert, with the text’s title page featuring the subtitle “A Daily Record of Life as

Seen by a Scientist” and detailing the author’s academic qualifications. Stopes’s self-definition as expert is, finally, of additional significance because it contradicts the author’s claim that she only embarked on her path to being a marriage guru in the wake of her subsequent failed marriage to Reginald Ruggles Gate. The introduction to *Love Letters* additionally predates the now-lost 1910 treatise on relationships that some Stopes scholars have cited as her earliest exploration of the subject.⁶² Stopes’s self-definition as relationship expert is thus of significance in terms of both the self-fragmentation that defines *Love Letters* and the way in which it nuances the author’s claims about the development of her thinking.

But the greater significance of this expert positioning only becomes apparent when one considers the disguises assigned to the two letter-writers. Both Mertyl Meredith and Watanabe Kenrio are presented as visual artists. Fujii/Watanabe thus avows that “Art and Philosophy was my strongest desire till now, but even that is now innermost governed by the Star of my Heart” (*LL*, from *KW*, June 9, p. 72), while Stopes/Meredith, worried about her prospects upon joining Fujii, “fear[s] an artist will not be much wanted in Japan” (*LL*, from *MM*, December 8, p. 172). Given that the figure of the artist is traditionally associated with passionate affect, while the relationship expert places herself in a position of dispassionate judgment vis-à-vis such affect, we might read these

choices in characterisation (for want of a better term) as yet another expression of a desire on Stopes's part to distance herself from her past self and its interracial engagement.

Interestingly, it is impossible for the reader to quantify the distance between the expert persona that the writing Stopes seeks to create and the past persona of the letter-writer. With most of the original letters no longer extant, one cannot gauge the extent of the alterations made to the original texts in order to construct these false artistic identities for the two scientists. Thus, when Fujii/Watanabe writes to "congratulate you that you are appointed to such a splendid post at the College of Art," as it will mean that "you can now continue quietly working also as an artist," it is impossible to ascertain whether a few words were substituted or if entire sentences were omitted or, conversely, added for publication. Fujii may have been referring to Stopes's appointment to a lectureship in Manchester in the original letter, but the reference to working as an artist appears to be a wholesale addition. The editorial note informing the reader that "Mr. Watanabe, an artist of established reputation in his own country, had been so struck by Mertyl Meredith's originality that he had asked her to collaborate in one of his illustrated books" may have originally referred to the scientific work on which the pair collaborated, but again, matters remain uncertain (*LL*, p. 24). We appear to be in the realms of what Stephen Reynolds

termed “autobiografiction.”⁶³ As Charles Swann explains with regard to Reynolds’s concept, “[t]his mixture of genres is what modern confessional literature ‘has’ to be. It can no longer simply testify. Fiction has to enter the picture, and fiction not in the form of realism merely, but as if it were fact.”⁶⁴ Just as is the case with *Love Letters*, other examples of autobiografiction “were originally praised for their sincerity, especially as that praise was deserved up to a point.”⁶⁵ In all cases, however, the “problem is deciding where that point is.”⁶⁶ The fictionalising fragmentation of the person of Marie Stopes into multiple personae not only suggests an impulse toward estrangement from a past self, then; it also troubles our genre-based hermeneutics of reading.

In addition to evoking a contrast between passionate artistry and dispassionate analysis, *Love Letters* draws on the related Orientalist discourse of observation of the Oriental subject in order to further distance Stopes from her past relationship with Fujii. Interpolated within such a discourse, Fujii becomes the quintessential Japanese subject, rather than a mere individual. According to the section titled “In Explanation,” the letters offer “a design, a revelation of Japanese character and Japanese inner life. The man [Fujii] is a native of Japan ... and he portrays not only his own personality, but a side of his nation’s character which the West has not often seen” (*LL*, “In Explanation”). The text thus offers nothing short of a “revelation of the psychology of the Japanese” (*LL*, “In

Explanation"). The bracketed editorial comments interspersed throughout the letters reinforce this claim with regard to particular aspects of the relationship. With regard to Fujii's handling of his divorce, the reader is thus informed that "[t]his extreme carefulness regarding details is very characteristic of the man, and also of his race" (LL, p. 182). By way of contrast, Stopes is anything but representative. That same explanatory section includes the observation that "Mertyl Meredith was in many ways hardly typical of her kind" (LL, "In Explanation"). And just as Fujii's apparent conformity to racial type contrasts with Stopes's ostensible exceptionality, so too does the distanced observation of Fujii contrast with the generation of an alliance between Stopes and her English readership. In her analysis of Fujii's behavior in the introduction to the letters, Stopes thus notes that "according to our standards, he treated her ... badly toward the end" (LL, p. 9). Moreover, in contrast to the curiosity attached to the Japanese, the introduction reminds the reader "how comprehensible is the position of an English woman who loves a Japanese man" (LL, pp. 8-9). In this way, the distancing from engagement with a Japanese subject produces a text that resembles Gilbert and Sullivan's *Mikado*, the subject of our second chapter. For, in both *The Mikado* and *Love Letters*, the corollary of estrangement from a racial other is an attempt to forge an alliance between the narrator or author on the one hand, and readers on the other.

I have made repeated use of the term “distance” in this section. In concluding the section, I wish to return to the somatic mode of analysis pursued earlier, with its emphasis on the body’s location in and experience of space. Stressing the physical once again, we might reconsider this key term. To be sure, “distance” may be read figuratively, denoting a sense of estrangement from the past, and to a large extent, this chapter has pursued such a reading of the term. But it is also important that one does not evacuate the concept of its literal significance as the intervening space between objects and/or subjects. We might additionally recall Gomel’s point that a name (such as “M. C. Stopes”), as well as denoting what Michel Foucault has termed an “author function,” still invokes an image of the authorial body, with its unavoidable positioning in physical space. As also noted above, Leah Price has described pseudonymity as a means of erecting a barrier between the reader and the authorial body.⁶⁷ While this would certainly appear to be the case in *Love Letters*, there also appears to be a rather more complex phenomenon at play than mere erasure or hiding of the body. Specifically, in its fracturing of the subjectivity of Marie Stopes into multiple personae, the text produces a proliferation of subject positions (with “position” having both physical and rhetorical valences here). With this proliferation comes what might be termed “deictic disorientation.” To clarify, terms such as “I,” “me,” “you,” “this” and “that,” “here” and “there,” “now” and then,” are all instances of deixis, a phenomenon whereby the denotative meaning of a term is

completely dependent upon context. Deictic terms may also be said to designate particular locations in physical space insofar as “you” or “I” can only be in one place in a given moment. That place will also stand in particular relationship to other positions occupied by other subjects. Stopes’s adoption of multiple personae—of the compiling editor “G. N. Mortlake,” the external expert, “M. C. Stopes,” and the lovelorn letter-writer “Mertyl Meredith”—within a single text constitutes a refusal to concede the unavoidable “locatedness” in space of the authorial body. Conversely, such a proliferation of subject positions might be read as an insistence on the possibility of occupying more than one location in space at a given moment. “I” may be “here,” analysing “him” over “there,” but the signified attached to each signifier is ambiguous. In either case, the text evinces a denial of the physical specificity of the authorial body, of its unavoidable presence in a single place—and only a single place—at a given moment.

Even more strikingly, *Love Letters of a Japanese* implies not only the simultaneous presence of the authorial body in multiple locations but also the simultaneous existence and non-existence of that body. That is to say, the multiplicity of subject positions in *Love Letters* includes both the insistently alive “M. C. Stopes” and “Mertyl Meredith,” whose love, Stopes tells us in the introduction, “was mortal, but mercifully ... died swiftly and killed her” (*LL*, pp.

10-1). One ostensibly living persona informs us of the apparent death of another. Interestingly, Mortlake, the putative author of the section entitled "In Explanation," informs us that "[b]oth the writers of these letters have passed away," and not merely Mertyl Meredith (LL, "In Explanation"). The textual presentation of a proliferation of personae is accompanied by the annihilation of at least one of those personae. However we read the reference to the male lover's death in "In Explanation" and the absence of such a reference in the introduction, we are not in the realms of autobiography in any simple sense. Rather, *Love Letters* appears to resemble autothanatography, the narration of the death of the subject. One is led to ask: must Stopes engage in textual self-annihilation in order to expunge her past experience of interracial corporeal engagement?

VI

Regardless of how one answers the above question, one is struck by the futility of this attempt at textual annihilation of a past self, and more specifically, the Japanglian engagement associated with that past self. Even if Stopes seeks to distance herself from this past encounter via an exercise in deictic dispersal or autothanatography, there is a sense in which she is unable to do so, unable to escape Japanglia. This becomes particularly apparent if we return to *Plays of Old Japan*. If we follow Stopes's own tropology as advanced in *POJN* and define

literal translation as a form of textual miscegenation, we must conclude that the author has, despite her best efforts, been unable to avoid producing a miscegenetic text. As Kobayashi points out, Stopes's translation is rife with precisely the kind of jarring literalisms that she cautions against in her preface to *POJN*.⁶⁸ For example, the translation of the play *Kagekiyo* includes the following:

Endeavoured as you honourably have
 To hasten on the way, already now
 This is Miyasaki, as it is called,
 To Hiuga you have honourably come.
 This is the place to honourably ask
 Your honourable father's whereabouts.

(*POJN*, p. 57)

Within the space of six lines, we encounter the term "honourably" and its variants no fewer than four times. The presence of such a term marks this as a highly literal translation from Japanese honorific language, with its numerous noun prefixes and unusual verb forms that do not translate readily into English and are usually rendered as "honourable/y" unless the translator adopts a freer approach. The mangled syntax, including the observation that "already now / This is Miyasaki," also marks this as a highly literal rendering of what would be

syntactically conventional in Japanese. The “body” of the Japanese original—and not merely its “spirit”—thus shows through. It is telling that it was the modernist Pound, an author completely lacking in both Japanese proficiency and any significant engagement with Japanese people, who produced a translation of the Noh that read smoothly to an Anglophone audience. Unlike Stopes, who experienced Noh plays in Japan and had direct ties with a Japanese collaborator, Pound was the heir to the papers of the eminent Japanologist Ernest Fenollosa (whom the reader might recall as Okakura’s scholarly progenitor and collaborator). The poet thus worked with Japanese drama in a rather attenuated way. Ten years after the 1916 publication of his *Noh, or Accomplishment*, Pound acknowledged in a letter that “I had not the philological competence necessary for an ultimate version, but ... Mrs. F[enollosa]’s conviction was that Fen[ollosa] wanted it trans[late]d as literature not as philology.”⁶⁹ This approach may have allowed for the ease of reading that marks Pound’s rendering of the Noh. In any case, it would appear that the impossibility of distancing oneself from direct Japanglian engagement registers in Stopes translation work, with the apparent success of Pound’s subsequent translation throwing this into relief.

Engaging more deeply with Stopes’s corporeal tropology of translation, one finds another sense in which Japanglia, once encountered, becomes inescapable. Stopes’s mingling of paraphrase and commentary in her “resume”

of the play *Tamura* suggests a striving toward a De Manian model of translation as a critical exercise, a reflection upon and setting of the original.⁷⁰ But such a view competes with—and, it would seem, is defeated by—Stope's own somatically defined translation process. The corporeality of the translation process is made apparent in the work of translation theorist Douglas Robinson, who puts forward what he terms a "physicalist" theory of translation.⁷¹ Robinson writes that the translator must attempt to inhabit and mimic the body of a native speaker of the target language in order to generate the given text/utterance in the target language.⁷² This is because the experience of using any language—whether one's native language or another tongue—is unavoidably corporeal; different words and sounds produce physical responses in the bodies of speakers, readers, and auditors. "We roll words around on our tongues," Robinson explains, "looking for the one that has just the right feel for what we want to say."⁷³ Extending this to our consideration of Stopes's Japanglian engagement, we might define translation as corporeal contact between three "bodies"—those of the two languages (or, specifically, their imagined speakers) meet in a third body, that of the translator. Translating between Japanese and English, Stopes adopts the somatics of a Japanese speaker before rendering such an experience intelligible in terms of her somatic experience of English. In this sense, her experience of her own corporeality is marked by the translation process—and marked as Japanglian. As Maier writes,

“translation implies a porosity that cannot be considered solely cerebral.”⁷⁴ If Japanglia is inscribed corporeally, it follows the subject wherever she goes. Japan and England blur in the body of Marie Stopes just as in many of the decorative art objects of the period.

But there is still yet another, more decisive sense in which Stopes’s bid to escape Japanglia fails before it starts. More than anything else, her escape attempt may be foiled by her own ambivalence about creating such distance. Writing on pseudonymity and anonymity, Mullan remarks that “only rarely is final concealment the aim.”⁷⁵ The author may harbour a wish (whether conscious or unconscious) to “provoke ... curiosity or conjecture.”⁷⁶ And this would indeed appear to be the case with Stopes’s *Love Letters*. How else is one to explain the simultaneous presence of both the distancing techniques discussed previously and tantalising hints at the letters’ true authorship? With regard to the latter, one should note—at the risk of repeating oneself—that Stopes, after all, attaches her name to the introduction to the letters. Such a move may hardly be classed as the adoption of “deep cover.” Moreover, even though she uses the androgynous “M. C. Stopes,” rather than her gender-marking given name, Stopes adds the identifying “Author of ‘A Journal from Japan’” (*LL*, p. 1). As Robert Griffin writes, such designations establish a “relation of filiation between texts.”⁷⁷ It is more than likely that the inquisitive reader, following the clues provided, would

be able to guess at the actual "relation of filiation" between *Journal from Japan* and *Love Letters of a Japanese*. A return to an imagined pure Englishness was neither feasible nor entirely desirable.

¹*Love Letters of a Japanese*, ed. G. N. Mortlake, 2d edn. (London: Stanley Paul, 1921). Letter from Mertyl Meredith, London, November 30, p. 321. Subsequent references to *Love Letters* are to this edition and will be cited parenthetically within the text as *LL*, with the author of the letter (either "MM" for Mertyl Meredith or "KW" for Kenrio Watanabe), location of writing, date, and page number where appropriate. Marie Stopes has not included years in her dating of the letters, a move that perhaps serves to further etherealise the missives while still allowing the reader to deduce the order in which individual letters were written.

² Richard A. Soloway, "The Galton Lecture 1996: Marie Stopes, Eugenics and the Birth Control Movement," in *Marie Stopes, Eugenics and the English Birth Control Movement*, ed. John Peel (London: Galton Institute, 1997), pp. 49-76, 49.

³ Carmen Blacker, "Marie Stopes (1907 [*sic*]-1958) and Japan," in *Britain and Japan: 1859-1991: Themes and Personalities* (London and New York: Routledge, 1991), pp. 157-65, 157.

⁴ Ruth Hall, *Marie Stopes: A Biography* (London: Andre Deutsch, 1977), pp. 47-8.

⁵ Blacker, p. 158.

⁶ Ruth Hall, p. 63.

⁷ June Rose, "The Evolution of Marie Stopes," in *Marie Stopes, Eugenics and the English Birth Control Movement*, pp. 13-26, 24.

⁸ Unable to obtain a copy of the first edition, I have relied on the second edition. It should be noted that the exact publication date for the latter is not entirely certain. I have cited the year of publication as 1921 as this is the date most commonly cited for the second edition on the WorldCat database.

⁹ Ruth Hall makes a convincing argument for the veracity of the letters in her biography, noting that Stopes's "claim in the introduction that the letters are unfictionalised appears to be justified ... the letters that survive in manuscript appear in *Love Letters* in exact transcriptions, even down to the date." Hall adds that "Marie did, however, change some locations from which the letters were written, and this has created some confusion ... Even so, the parallels are sufficient to justify the use of *Love Letters*, provided full source references are given ..."

¹⁰ Marie C. Stopes, *A Journal from Japan: A Daily Record of Life as Seen by a Scientist* (London: Blackie and Son, 1910). Subsequent references to *Journal from Japan*

(hereafter JJ) are to this edition and will be cited parenthetically in the text by page number.

¹¹ Marie C. Stopes and Professor Jōji Sakurai, *Plays of Old Japan: The 'Nō'* (London: William Heinemann, 1913). Subsequent references to *Plays of Old Japan* (hereafter POJN) are to this edition and will appear parenthetically in the text by page number.

¹² Blacker, p. 157.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Christina Hauck, "Through a Glass Darkly: 'A Game of Chess' and Two Plays by Marie Stopes," *Journal of Modern Literature* 21, 1 (Summer, 1997): 109-19, 110.

¹⁵ Soloway, p. 59; John Peel, introduction to *Marie Stopes, Eugenics and the English Birth Control Movement*, pp. 1-12, 3.

¹⁶ Ruth Hall, p. 175.

¹⁷ Angelique Richardon, *Love and Eugenics in the Late Nineteenth Century* (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 2003), p. xvi.

¹⁸ Donald J. Childs, *Modernism and Eugenics: Woolf, Eliot, Yeats, and the Culture of Degeneration* (Cambridge UK: Cambridge Univ. Press 2001), p. 6; Diane F. Gillespie, "Marie Stopes: Her War for Peace," in *Women in the Milieu of Leonard and Virginia Woolf: Peace, Politics, and Education*, ed. Wayne K. Chapman and Janet M. Manson (New York: Pace Univ. Press, 1998), pp. 96-110, 102-3.

¹⁹ David Bradshaw, "Eugenics: 'They Should Certainly Be Killed,'" in *A Concise Companion to Modernism*, ed. Bradshaw (Malden MA: Blackwell, 2003), pp. 34-55, 39.

²⁰ Stopes qtd. in Ruth Hall, p. 182.

²¹ Lucy Burke, "In Pursuit of an Erogamic Life: Marie Stopes and the Culture of Married Love," in *Women's Experience of Modernity, 1875-1945*, ed. Leslie W. Lewis and Ann L. Ardis (Baltimore MD: Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 2003), pp. 254-69, 254.

²² Burke, p. 255n9.

²³ Stopes, *Married Love: A Solution to the Sex Difficulties*, ed. Ross McCubbin (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 2004), p. 39.

²⁴ Alexander C. T. Geppert, "Divine Sex, Happy Marriage, Regenerated Nation: Marie Stopes's Marital Manual *Married Love* and the Making of a Best-Seller, 1918-1955," *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 8, 3 (January 1998): 389-433, 431.

²⁵ Ruth Hall, p. 39.

²⁶ Lesley A. Hall, "Uniting Science and Sensibility: Marie Stopes and the Narratives of Marriage in the 1920s," in *Rediscovering Forgotten Radicals: British Women Writers, 1889-1939*, ed. Angela Ingram and Daphne Patai (Chapel Hill and London: Univ. of North Carolina Press, 1993), pp. 118-36, 130.

²⁷ Blacker, p. 163.

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- ²⁸ Kobayashi Manji, "Marie Stopes to Ezra Pound [Marie Stopes and Ezra Pound]," *Eigo Seinen/Rising Generation* 123 (1977): 397-9, 398.
- ²⁹ Kobayashi, p. 397.
- ³⁰ David Ewick, "Japonisme, Orientalism, Modernism: A Bibliography of Japan in English-Language Verse of the Early Twentieth Century," accessible at <http://themargins.net/bib/B/BK/bk152.html> . Last accessed May 24, 2011.
- ³¹ Blacker, p. 163.
- ³² Blacker, p. 163.
- ³³ Blacker, pp. 163-4.
- ³⁴ It should, however, be noted that Stopes's individual authorship of the prefatory essay in *POJN* is not a matter of uncertainty.
- ³⁵ James Krasner, "Doubtful Arms and Phantom Limbs: Literary Portrayals of Embodied Grief," *PMLA* 119, 2 (March 2004): 218-32, 219.
- ³⁶ Krasner, p. 221.
- ³⁷ Krasner, p. 225.
- ³⁸ Ruth Hall, pp. 73-4.
- ³⁹ Ruth Hall, pp. 72-3.
- ⁴⁰ Ruth Hall, pp. 74-5.
- ⁴¹ Peter Brooks, *Body Work: Objects of Desire in Modern Narrative* (Cambridge MA: Harvard Univ. Press, 1993), p. 19.
- ⁴² Krasner, p. 225.
- ⁴³ Carol Maier, "Translating as a Body: Meditations on Mediation (Excerpts 1994-2004)," in *The Translator as Writer*, ed. Susan Bassnett and Peter Bush (London and New York: Continuum, 2006), pp. 137-48, 141-2.
- ⁴⁴ Brooks, p. 21.
- ⁴⁵ Gillespie's study is of interest in this regard. Writing of Stopes's plays, Gillespie observes that "even in a theatrical context in which the 'New Woman' had begun to make inroads, Stopes's heroines struck readers as emasculating" (pp. 97-8).
- ⁴⁶ Paul Peppis, "Mina Loy, Marie Stopes, and Sexology," *Modernism/Modernity* 9, 4 (2002): 561-79, 569.
- ⁴⁷ Burke, pp. 258-9.
- ⁴⁸ Burke, p. 258.
- ⁴⁹ Burke, p. 261.
- ⁵⁰ Brooks, p. 7.
- ⁵¹ Brooks, p. 7.
- ⁵² Lesley A. Hall, p. 131.
- ⁵³ Geppert, p. 408.
- ⁵⁴ Lara L. Fraser, "The Perfect Union: Marie Stopes, the Middle Classes, and the Quest for Happy Monogamy," Doctoral Dissertation, Brandeis University, 2000, p. 5.

⁵⁵ Brooks, p. 15.

⁵⁶ Elana Gomel, "Oscar Wilde, *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, and the (Un)Death of the Author," *Narrative* 12, 1 (2004): 74-92, 76.

⁵⁷ Lloyd Humberstone, "Names and Pseudonyms", *Philosophy* 70, 274 (October 1995), 487-512, 508.

⁵⁸ Larry McCaffery, review of K. K. Ruthven, *Faking Literature* in *Modernism/Modernity* 9, 1 (January 2002), 200-2,

⁵⁹ John Mullan, *Anonymity: A Secret History of English Literature* (London: Faber and Faber, 2007), p. 17.

⁶⁰ Mullan, p. 28.

⁶¹ Gomel, pp. 85 and 81.

⁶² See, for example, Lesley Hall, pp. 120-1.

⁶³ Stephen Reynolds qtd. in Charles Swann, "'Autobiografiction': Problems with Autobiographical Fictions and Fictional Autobiographies. Mark Rutherford's *Autobiography and Deliverance*, and Others," *Modern Language Review* 96, 1 (January 2001): 21-37, 29.

⁶⁴ Swann, p. 36.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ Leah Price, "From Ghostwriter to Typewriter: Delegating Authority at Fin de Siecle," in *The Faces of Anonymity: Anonymous and Pseudonymous Publication from the Sixteenth to the Twentieth Century*, ed. Robert Griffin (London: Palgrave, 2003), pp. 211-31.

⁶⁸ Kobayashi, p. 399.

⁶⁹ Pound qtd. in the original English in Kobayashi, p. 399.

⁷⁰ Paul de Man, "'Conclusions' Walter Benjamin's 'The Task of the Translator'" in *Yale French Studies* 69 (1985): 25-46, 34.

⁷¹ Douglas Robinson, *The Translator's Turn* (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 1991), pp. ix-x.

⁷² Robinson, pp. 16-7.

⁷³ Robinson, p. 5.

⁷⁴ Maier, p. 147.

⁷⁵ Mullan, p. 20.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ Robert J. Griffin, Introduction to *The Faces of Anonymity*, pp. 1-17, 9.

Conclusion:

Dresser's Study and Mine

As tends to be the case with undertakings of this magnitude, this project began as one thing and ended as quite another. It was to be a study of the ways in which, for fin-de-siècle writers, Japan was primarily an aesthetic entity; Japan meant “not words but things,” and specifically art objects.¹ To be sure, I intended, where possible, to analyse Japanese responses to such representations. In this sense, the project was not monolithic in its conception of English hegemony. But it soon became apparent that this project—with its focus on material culture and its conception of two fairly discrete cultural spheres—would not capture the transcultural dynamic at play in one of the first texts I considered, Dresser's *Japan: Its Architecture, Art, and Art Manufactures*. It was a pair of sentences in Dresser's narrative that offered the first hint of the operation of this dynamic:

I have now described my experiences while passing through a strange and interesting country; but while I travelled from place to place I little thought that all that I said or did was to be published to the world: but so it is. After the lapse of some months I received in London, a copy of a sort of blue book which had been printed and circulated throughout the manufacturing districts of Japan: and

as this record seems to throw light on my journey I think it well to give translations of portions of this curious document.²

The first clause here is situated firmly in the realm of the Victorian travel narrative, with its reference only to “my experiences” and its alienating designation of Japan as “strange and interesting.” The succession of turns that follow, each marked by a “but,” takes us somewhere else. Dresser might have stopped here, alluding only to the existence of the Japanese report before dismissing it out of hand; but he does not. And it seems that he could not. Perhaps, in that moment in which the mailed report arrived in Dresser’s study, it also forced entry into his “study” in that other sense of the word, in the sense of the scholarly undertaking on which he spent so many years after his Japan trip. Once it had arrived, this text so altered his thinking regarding his experiences in Japan that he simply could not omit it from his account. Retracing the intellectual steps of the author, I could not ignore the implications of the report’s existence, either. It was at this point that the dissertation stopped being a study of Japan and England and became one of Japanglia.

None of this is to suggest that, in changing the focus of the project, I have abandoned consideration of the role of aesthetics in mediating and defining Anglo-Japanese relationships. Indeed, aesthetics and related impulses toward

display are shown to be of key importance to such relationships in all of the case studies that I have presented. For Dresser, comparisons of aesthetic systems, which his mentor Owen Jones termed “grammar[s] of ornament,” offer something akin to a “key to all mythologies.” In the case of Gilbert and Sullivan’s *Mikado*, it is an aestheticised representation of Japan in the form of the ubiquitous *ukiyo-e* print that constitutes the primary model for the opera’s representation of Japanese society. Similarly in the case of both Kipling and Okakura, the common use of a tropology of exhibition suggests that for both English and Japanese alike, Japan can only be perceived in aesthetic terms. Finally, although aesthetics are not at the forefront of Stopes’s Japan writings, the imperative to display is of central concern. Falling back on an Orientalist discourse of observation, Stopes attempts to position her Japanese former lover as an object of curiosity, a display piece. In all of these respects, both aesthetics and display remain central to the project.

Also of central importance has been the translation process. The fraught relationship between Dresser’s *Japan: Its Architecture, Art, and Art Manufactures* and Ishida Tametake’s *Eikoku Dokutoru* is repeatedly cast in terms of the fallibility of interlinguistic translation. On a deeper level, Dresser also presents his intellectual project as one of aesthetic translation. The process of translation is perhaps even more significant for Okakura, whose choice to write in English and

to employ a central concept (that of the museum) that has no direct equivalent in Japanese positions him in problematic relation to the ostensibly Japanese culture he seeks to protect from Western (especially English) contamination. But it is for Stopes that the translation process is of most fundamental importance. For if we conceive of this process in somatic, phenomenological terms, it becomes apparent that the Englishwoman's translation work renders her a Japanglian subject. She is thus distanced from a purely English linguistic phenomenology as surely as Okakura's tendency to write in English (rather than Japanese) distances him from a sense of unproblematic Japaneseness.

But the project's key contribution to literary study is perhaps less thematic than it is conceptual and methodological. I refer here to the project's consideration of the implications of transculturality for literary study and its concomitant application of the methodology of multi-site ethnography to the analysis of textual representations of Japan. In formulating the concept of Japanglia, I have explored a range of phenomena, overlaps resulting from transcultural entanglement. In the first chapter, such phenomena included the development of transnational bureaucratic networks, the international exhibition system presided over by members of these networks, and the exchange of art objects and museum personnel between Japan and England. The operation of these phenomena in turn demands that we read intertextually when considering

literary works that emerge from such networks and exchanges. The second chapter explores the consequences of the exchange of art objects in a more attenuated sense, with its consideration of Gilbert and Sullivan's use of the *ukiyo-e* artform in *The Mikado*. In the third chapter, this cluster of phenomena expands to include the exchange in scholarship and intellectual capital between Japan and England in this period, particularly Social Darwinist thought and what Timothy Mitchell terms "the exhibitionary order."³ Such intellectual overlaps account for some of the similarities in the work of seemingly disparate figures such as Kipling and Okakura. The project's final chapter considers a form of transcultural overlap that is perhaps of greatest significance for the individual subject in its examination of the corporeal manifestations of Japanglian engagement. Throughout the project, then, Japanglian overlaps resulting from transcultural contact are a matter of central importance.

I would caution once again that the presence of such entanglements should not lead us to attribute all transcultural commonalities to contact. In the second and third chapters in particular, I have been careful to distinguish between contact-based commonalities and those that appear to arise coincidentally. In the latter camp, I have included phenomena associated with modernity such as rapid urbanisation and the growth of a prosperous urban middle class, both of which are discussed in my second chapter. In the case of

The Mikado, I argue, the seeming congruence between the worlds of *ukiyo-e* and Titipu may be attributed to both the contact-based commonalities discussed previously and these coincidental commonalities. The third chapter adds to this cluster of coincidental phenomena in its examination of the parallel development of art historical epistemologies and notions of the nation-state and imperial expansion in both Japan and England. Once again, such coincidental phenomena leave their mark in the common tropologies of both English and Japanese writers. In encompassing these two forms of transcultural commonality, the concept of Japanglia forces us to interrogate our conceptions of modernisation. With its transnational reach and its occurrence in local, idiosyncratic forms, modernisation appears to be at once more diffuse and more restricted than commonly assumed.

¹ Basil Hall Chamberlain, *Things Japanese* (London: Kegan Paul, 2001), p. 2.

² Christopher Dresser, *Japan, Its Architecture, Art and Art Manufactures* (New York: Kegan Paul, 1882, rpt. 2001), p. 214.

³ Timothy Mitchell, "Orientalism and the Exhibitionary Order" in *Grasping the World*, pp. 442–59, 443.

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